A
TRAVELLER'S TALE
OF
The last Century:

BY

ELIZABETH ISABELLA SPENCE,

AUTHOR OF LETTERS FROM THE NORTH HIGHLANDS;
AND THE CURATE AND HIS DAUGHTER.

——————— Unknown, unlov'd ———
——————— No fondness bade rejoice,
None soothed in pain or sorrow.

MISS MITFORD'S *Blanche.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
Printed by Strahan and Spottiswoode, Printers-Street;
FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1819.

A



TRAVELLER'S TALE.

CHAPTER I.

THE early buds of spring were beginning to unfold their tender blossoms, the snow had totally disappeared, and the lawn was covered with soft verdure; the birds were performing their concerts in the air, and every thing in nature wore such a gay aspect, that Deletia, whose health and spirits had experienced the happiest influence from the soothing and lively visits of Lady Elinor, proposed a saunter in the pleasure-grounds. Her ladyship offered her arm to her invalid friend, and they directed their course towards Barton Cliff.

Deletia now, for the first time since her sojourn at Lady Barbara's, saw to advantage the picturesque situation of her villa.

The mansion was separated by a velvet lawn from the brow of the cliff, and sheltered by a rich plantation, which, sweeping round the pleasure-grounds, afforded a shelter from the bleak winds. The front, open to the ocean, commanded a noble view of the deep azure silent sea, with the poetic Medina river, winding in beautiful transparency through the pastoral valleys. This extensive landscape combined a prospect of the busy towns of Portsmouth and Gosport, crowded with shipping; and at a considerable distance, uniting with the sea, the magnificent Southampton water, with the towers and spires of that picturesque town, almost unrivalled for the beauty of its situation.

It was the first time she had tasted the pure and reviving air for several

weeks; its genial influence seemed to renovate her with its balmy freshness. Having always been accustomed to the lovely landscapes of nature, she now returned to those scenes with new enjoyment; and she was enchanted with such a combination of fine objects as was now before her. She felt comparatively well and happy; and, as she pressed the hand of her new friend, "O! Lady Elinor," exclaimed she, "how delightful is this moment! The heavy oppression which I suffered is lightened by your sweet society; it is the first time in my life I am sensible of possessing a tender friend who regards me. For oh! how sad is the experience of that desolation in the heart, which is not filled up by friendship. Even all these beauteous scenes would be divested of half their charms, if viewed in perfect solitude. Do you not delight in the sober pleasures of the country?"

"Yes," replied her ladyship smiling,

"when not *too* sober. I like a mixture of all things in this world. Those, taken in an even course, will eventually become dull. The mind was formed for variety, and taste would satiate, even with all the sweets of life, without a little Attic salt to give them relish."

"You must try the experiment," continued she, "my dear Miss Granville, of my doctrine, and allow me to hope, that you will change the scene with us for Oakley Park. Warwickshire, I confess, cannot boast of all the wild grandeur of your native Devonshire, nor of even this fairy island; but yet it is pretty, diversified, and fertile. Beside, it is very selfish to monopolise you to ourselves, when my precious sister Robina will consider your society so valuable an addition to our family-party. You will have no other at Oakley Park. My sister is not satisfied with ordinary people; nor, in truth, is my brother. If the trio is broken, it must be by people of superior

attainments, for we go on very well and very happily in our own way; though sometimes, I acknowledge, I do take a few weeks of London, with some gay friends, who live there, when Dorringcourt and Robina become weary of company and amusements."

"I am afraid," said Deletia, half smiling, "I shall soon be banished as unworthy to remain in your ladyship's circle."

"Say not so. The first glimpse we all had of you, inspired interest and compassion in your favour; which has since increased every hour that we have had the pleasure of being better acquainted."

Dorringcourt perceived them at a distance returning from the cliff; he advanced and joined them.

"Will Miss Granville," cried he, with looks of pleasure as he approached, "permit one of her most ardent well-wishers to congratulate her on her

improved health, and escape from tyrannical persecution?"

Deletia courtesyed, and replied with some confusion, "To you, my lord, I owe much gratitude, for your prompt interference in more instances than one; but from every member, sir, of your family, I experience only friendship and kindness."

"If I should not," said his lordship earnestly, "be considered as too much presuming on your goodness, might I, sweetest Miss Granville, be permitted to unite my request with that of Elinor's, in begging that you will return with us to Oakley Park. There is nothing considered so genial for an invalid, as change of air."

"But," added he, with emotion, "in urging my request, I acknowledge myself guided by interested motives; for who that has once tasted the charms of Miss Granville's society, can be reconciled to a separation?"

Deletia was deeply penetrated with so high a compliment from Lord Dorringcourt; and felt at a loss how to reply. When, however, both his lordship and his sister urged the visit in the most earnest manner, she said, that "she would refer them to Mr. Rutherford; and if he approved her leaving Barton villa, she hoped it was unnecessary to add the delight she should experience in accompanying them."

In the evening, when Mr. and Mrs. Clinton joined the party, the subject was discussed. They were of opinion, that Oakley Park would prove even a more secure asylum, from the pursuit of Lord Valville, than Barton villa.

"What," said Mr. Clinton, addressing Lady Barbara, "may I ask, is your ladyship's opinion of the matter?"

"It will," answered she, "prove almost an insupportable blank, losing all my amiable guests at the same moment, who have rendered my house so lively

and agreeable. But, called upon freely to speak my opinion," added she, smiling significantly, "I think my nephew and niece will never forgive me, were I to retain Miss Granville from them, and they will profit so much by the addition of her society, I cannot think of depriving them of it. Robina too will be much cheered and delighted with so charming an acquisition."

"Miss Granville," said her ladyship, "you will, I hope, derive benefit from change of air; but if you should not, remember you have always a friend at Barton villa, who will be happy to receive you."

It was at length agreed that Mr. Clinton, Lady Barbara, and Lady Elinor Arden, should each address a few lines to Mr. Rutherford; and that the invitation given to Deletia to Oakley Park should come from Lady Elinor.

The letters were dispatched, and in the course of post, answers were returned, the one to Lady Barbara was as follows:

"To Lady Barbara Arden.

"Madam,

"Though I have no right to assume any controul over the actions of Miss Granville, yet as she has in some degree placed herself under my guidance, I, without hesitation, declare it as my opinion, that she ought to accept Lady Elinor Arden's invitation, and accompany her to Oakley Park. It is even more out of the ordinary line of pursuit than Barton villa, where she has been so hospitably received and entertained.

"I shall always be on the alert to discover Lord Valville's plans. When I find there is any cause for alarm, I shall think it incumbent on me to inform Miss Granville. May she enjoy a continuance of the kindness and felicity which she now experiences.

"I remain,

"Your ladyship's, &c.

Chancery-lane. "J. Rutherford."

March 26.

Deletia, scarcely hoping such a favourable issue to the request, was elated with delight.

Every day Lord Dorringcourt and his sister won upon her esteem. To become the guest of a family of such inestimable worth, seemed to be a felicity so perfect, she scarce dared credit the reality.

Deletia took leave of Lady Barbara, and the worthy curate and his wife, with sentiments of gratitude and regard.

Attended by Victoire, she set out with her friends for Oakley Park.

CHAPTER II.

It was the beautiful season of spring when they commenced their journey, when every object is gay and smiling. Every bank was enamelled with primroses and violets, every meadow covered with cowslips, where lambs were gambolling; the trees full of blossoms, which perfumed the air, rendered vocal with the songs of myriads of birds.

Oakley Park was situated between the towns of Warwick and Kenilworth. The domain was noble, extensive, and luxuriant in cultivation. Accustomed as Deletia had always been to the heavy grandeur, the gloomy sequestration of Granville Abbey, she was delighted with the gay-smiling aspect of Oakley

Park, which was laid out with much taste and beauty. A noble piece of water flowed through the Park, so broad and pellucid as to possess the imposing appearance of a lake. The front windows of the mansion commanded a view of it, and of noble woods, composed chiefly of ancient oak-trees, which spread to a vast extent. Multitudes of deer herded in the park, and the rich pastures beyond were filled with sheep and cattle.

The stately mansion of modern architecture stood on a gentle eminence, and was supported by light Corinthian pillars. The hall, paved with marble, with columns of the same, was filled with beautiful sculpture. The grand staircase descended into the hall, and fine paintings adorned the walls up to the long gallery, which was filled with a rare and valuable collection done by the first masters.

No expence had been spared in the furniture of the apartments, which was rich and handsome. It was not, how-

ever, perfectly modern, for the present Earl of Dorringcourt held the taste of his deceased parents in too much veneration to demolish and alter rooms which they had taken so much trouble to ornament. No change was made but what was absolutely necessary for convenience. None of the family portraits had been banished to the garret. None of the valuable cabinets of antiquities removed for the purpose of realising money. The venerable woods, which sheltered the mansion, were not cut down for timber, but every thing stood within and without the noble mansion as it had done in old times.

When the party alighted, Lady Elinor exclaimed, "Tell me, dear Miss Granville, whether or not you shall be able to exist in this place with the hum-drum party of two sisters and a brother? I can promise you no better entertainment without you prefer the animal creation; in which event there is a great variety

around us. Say candidly if we may impose on you the seclusion of Oakley Park?"

Deletia could only press Lady Elinor's hand in warm acknowledgment for the delight which she experienced.

"If," said she, "you are fond of birds and beasts, you shall often be the companion of my rambles. I have a wonderful fancy for so harmless a part of the creation, I pride myself on my aviary, and I also have a vast fondness for the pretty little fawns and the young colts; they are so happy ranging at liberty, and playing their gambols in the park. You will too be satiated with exotics; every habitable room sends forth the rich perfumes of an eastern clime, with the fragrance of my flowers. It will take you at least a week, when you walk abroad, to look at the conservatory and the various families which I assemble around me. But if you prefer home amusements, there is a library, picture-

rooms, a harpsichord, maps, globes, &c. &c."

Lord Dorringcourt, as the noble owner of this magnificent place, now stepped forward, and respectfully taking Deletia's hand, which he pressed to his lips, "Allow me thus," said he, "to welcome Miss Granville to Oakley Park. Graced by so attractive a guest, my neighbours will look with envy on the happiness we possess. Suffer me to lead you to my other sister, she is worthy of your friendship and regard."

They found Lady Robina Somerville seated in a handsome drawing-room which commanded a delightful prospect of the park. It had a most cheerful aspect, for the apartment was elegantly furnished, and the walls covered with landscapes done by the first Italian artists.

Her ladyship was placed at a table with her little girl on her knee, and seemed to be employed in instructing her from a book and pictures, which lay before her.

A boy of about two years of age was playing on the carpet with a beautiful spaniel.

Her ladyship was going to displace her child, that she might rise to bid Deletia welcome, but she would not allow her. "Your ladyship," said she, with polite affability, "forms such a pretty subject for a portrait, I should think it quite a sin to disturb you; were I an artist, my pencil would be called into immediate exercise. That cherub boy, with his redundance of fair hair, half concealing with its graceful ringlets the playfulness of his blue eyes, as he slyly peeps at the spaniel, is really a portrait of itself. And your sweet little girl, with her auburn curls, laughing dimples, and coral lips, is just our arch friend, Lady Elinor, in miniature. This little girl is an epitome of her aunt."

"May my Charlotte," cried Lady Robina, "prove but half as excellent, and quite as happy, and I shall consider her

a *rara avis*, for good and happy are, alas! by no means synonymous.

"But permit me, also, Miss Granville," rising and saluting her, "to express my delight in seeing you at Oakley Park."

Deletia was shown by Lady Elinor the apartment and dressing-room which she was to occupy, and she desired she would consider them from henceforth as entirely her own.

CHAPTER III.

The peace, the affection, the harmony, which reigned at Oakley Park, were so in unison with every surrounding beauty, that Deletia began to forget she had ever been unhappy.

One day succeeded to another in uninterrupted felicity; as little as possible she allowed herself to revert to the past; and she took her portion of the present with mingled sensations of gratitude and enjoyment. Time never passed heavily; because every hour was occupied either in some act of beneficence, or filled up in some useful and instructive employment.

Lady Robina Somerville usually devoted the greatest part of the morning

to her children. Lady Elinor had also a young family of little girls around her, to whom she allotted some useful employment, and rewarded them, before they returned to their lowly parents, with some necessary article of wearing apparel.

Nor was Lord Dorringcourt without his avocations. He looked into the situation of his poor tenants, he relieved their wants, he promoted their industry. He encouraged husbandry in its various branches, he rendered every man, on his own grounds, emulous, to account for the portion of land allotted him. It was delightful to behold the veneration in which Lord Dorringcourt was held amongst his tenants, whom, if he did not immediately relieve, he never oppressed: he was condescending without freedom. In his own mansion, so properly were his domestics regulated, his orders were no sooner expressed than fulfilled. All his household were prompt

in their services; for though Lord Dorringcourt was always decided in what he said, his decision was not that of tyranny or injustice; for his laws were formed on the basis of wisdom and experience. His lordship desired that the memory of his father should live in the hearts of his vassals, and by preserving his late habits and customs, the veneration in which he was held was returned with interest upon himself.

Deletia felt at length at ease, and in security; with the distribution of her time, much at her own disposal.

The family, after breakfast, always separated for a few hours to their particular avocations; after which a walk, a ride, or an airing, was proposed.

The neighbourhood of Oakley Park abounded with several inviting objects worthy the notice of the admirers of antiquity; and of classic observation, to the curious and ingenious traveller.

Lord Dorringcourt had a taste for

every thing connected with science, ancient grandeur, and beautiful and elegant arts. As Deletia's health and vigour improved, they made several excursions into their own and neighbouring county, no two combining so much classic lore in any of the others throughout England.

They visited Kenilworth and Warwick Castles, Litchfield, Stratford-upon-Avon, and Lord Lyttelton's Hagley.

These interesting places opened new and delightful sources of knowledge to Deletia. She could not have travelled with a companion more intirely formed to disseminate instruction than Lord Dorringcourt. He spared no pains in unfolding to her every feature and character connected with the places which they visited. Unlike many people of fashion, who just peep at these celebrated spots, because they are celebrated, with careless indifference hurry through them, they paused over every relic worth obser-

vation. They trod the classic ground of Shakspeare, Johnson, and Garrick, with feelings of admiration and enthusiasm that did honour to the sentiments of delight which their immortal talents inspired. They bestowed also, amidst the shades of Hagley, their tribute of respect to the memory of that lady Lord Lyttelton had so recently deplored in his pathetic and beautiful monody.

The profound solitude and ignorance in which Deletia had hitherto passed her days, made her fancy she was only now coming into life. Hitherto it had been spent without energy, or the society of any interesting object to inspire regard.

The company of Lord Dorringcourt and his sisters never wearied. There was nothing puerile in their pursuits or occupations. If they lived to themselves, they lived not for themselves alone, for not a single day passed without some one being benefited or improved.

They associated with few of the neigh-

bouring families, in the way of ceremonious visits, but they did not consider the time bestowed on every-day people repaid them for its loss.

The manners of the young women a century ago were quite opposite to the present. That undaunted boldness and spirit of ridicule, that inattention to the aged, and self-sufficiency, now so general, never appeared in young ladies of birth and breeding, which characterise them at the present day.

When they were introduced into society, their part assigned, was to hear and attend, and demean themselves with respect and silence.

This was indeed carried to an extreme; the reserve which was then considered as a branch of education, impeded all developement of ideas, interchange of sentiment, and improvement in conversation, in which no young person was expected to bear a part, or even speak

if unaddressed, and then by monosyllables. How would their good grandmothers have been appalled to hear them (as now) discussing systems, expatiating on chemistry, and criticising books, with all the pertinacity of students, and the confidence of authors!

What has been gained in knowledge, it is to be feared, has been lost in character, and that (with some eminent exceptions) female brilliancy has subtracted somewhat from female excellency,

> "Which more resembles Cynthia's temper'd light
> Than Sol's resplendent blaze."

Long as Lord Dorringcourt had been on the continent, gaming was a description of diversion he never indulged in, daily as he was in the way of seeing it. He had more than once beheld persons of the most amiable qualites and domestic habits, insensibly led into the practice of gaming, till they became so infatuated with it, as to sap the foundation

of sober and rational happiness, which, once broken by so dangerous a vice, ended in ruin, despair, and misery. He had seen the tenderest bonds of conjugal affection severed; and so great a foe did he consider, even moderate play, to every moral virtue, his lordship never would admit a card-table in his house, consequently very few country families would visit at Oakley Park.

The evenings were spent in the rational amusements of reading or music.

Lady Robina excelled on the harpsichord, Lady Elinor on the harp.

Deletia was sometimes prevailed upon to join them with her voice in a trio or duet, and, guided by the correct taste of Lady Elinor, she made rapid improvement.

Lord Dorringcourt was always the person who read aloud, whilst the ladies worked. His chaste and well pointed

judgment of the drama gave a peculiar charm to his readings of Shakespeare, which only those of an elegant and correct mind can render just, or excel in realising fiction.

Lord Dorringcourt also directed his taste to the selection of the living wits and poets of his own day.

Beautiful as Deletia had ever thought the writings of Thomson, Gray, Lyttelton, Goldsmith, and Shenstone, yet when they were read to her by Lord Dorringcourt, she seemed before to have missed a thousand fine passages which were now unfolded.

Sometimes works of imagination were read; particularly Richardson's Grandison, wherein was combined novelty and originality of character, lively and spirited conversations, and the most pathetic scenes, delineated with all the finest touches of a master's hand, from the only just model, truth and nature; for

perfection in that species of writing could not rise higher.

Thus did the few weeks Deletia had now spent at Oakley Park glide on, in all those rational and delightful sources of pleasure and instruction, which tend to exalt the mind and enlighten the understanding.

CHAPTER IV.

THE acute sufferings which Deletia had experienced from the persecution of Valville, and the tyrannical cruelty of his mother, with the cloud of mystery which hung over the fate of her ever-lamented parents, made all the family of the Dorringcourts particularly delicate and guarded in naming any subject which might, in the most distant manner, lead to painful retrospection.

They had even for some time carefully avoided showing her an anti-drawing-room, in which hung a full-length portrait of Lady Deletia Granville, considered an admirable likeness, and which the late Countess of Dorringcourt had prevailed upon her to sit for, previous to her marriage.

Soon after their return from their excursion, Deletia having by mistake got into a wrong passage, accidentally opened the door of this apartment.

The picture was placed in so conspicuous a part, that it could not be overlooked. She started on beholding the full length figure of a lovely young woman, with whose countenance she seemed to be familiar. She was robed in white, and painted as a Hebe; which at that youthful age, was particularly suited to her air and character.

Deletia always carried the miniature which she found in the fishing-house about her person. She took it out, and minutely examined the features; they were the same as the portrait now before her. She became agitated, and her emotions so powerfully affected her, that she was scarcely able to reach the room where the family were assembled. Pale and breathless she entered.

Lady Robina observed her pallid and

altered countenance. "Are you ill, my dear Miss Granville?—speak—tell me what has happened?"—

"That picture?" cried Deletia, in a faltering accent, "Oh! say, is it my mother?"

Lady Robina hesitated; she was afraid of increasing her agitation.

"Keep me not in suspense," added she, "if it is really intended for my precious parent, Oh, let me go and prostrate myself in dutiful respect before the shade of my injured mother!"

"It is intended," replied her ladyship, "to represent one of the most angelic of women, Lady Deletia Granville; she was, my sweet young friend, in truth your mother."

"May I inquire," said Deletia, "how you became possessed of that portrait? It is singular there is not any such in Granville Abbey; and how strange, that in the house of persons so recently known, I should have fallen into the society

of those who, from report, knew and estimated my mother's worth. Now, indeed, may I hope, to come at some of the circumstances from your ladyship, of Lady Deletia Granville's disastrous and brief life. You surely, Lady Robina, will not refuse to acquaint me with all the circumstances you know; for you have told me, that a friendship existed between our parents; therefore, what you will detail must be authentic. I am eager to have the strange mystery unfolded, which appears to be attached to Lady Valville's unfortunate connection with persons, whose happiness she seems to have wantonly destroyed, and to have severed by the most perfidious treachery. My father's marriage too with such a woman! — some deep-laid scheme must have been practised, to have incautiously ensnared him. For, Oh! who can fathom the perfidy, the wily arts of Lady Valville!"

"The tale," answered Lady Robina,

" is long and mournful; and, indeed, my knowledge of many of the circumstances are so imperfect, (for when I heard them I was a mere child,) the remembrance is like the impression of a distempered and horrible dream. However, if you will give me your company to-morrow morning, in my dressing-room, I will then endeavour to relate all that I can call to my recollection: but the subject is of so delicate and painful a nature, I scarcely like to enter upon it for fear of falling into error, and criminating those who are, I hope, innocent. I can, however, show you a few letters from Lady Deletia Granville, to my mother, which perhaps will unfold more light on the subject, than all I can you.—I know a close correspondence always existed between our mothers, and that some of the letters were preserved, and remain in a drawer of the cabinet, which belonged to the late countess."

"Oh, how interesting," returned Deletia, "will prove to me the perusal of my mother's letters. Addressed to such an intimate and beloved a friend as the late Countess of Dorringcourt, I shall see a transcript of her mind, which no doubt, without disguise, will be laid open to her; and if the correspondence does not even elucidate some of the former sad events belonging to her life, I, at least, shall have the mournful satisfaction of obtaining some acquaintance with the character and sentiments of my mother.

"Dear Lady Robina," added Deletia, "how much I am obliged by your kindness. I will not fail to attend you to-morrow."

CHAPTER V.

With eager impatience Deletia counted the hours spent in sleepless anxiety during the night, until her engagement was to be fulfilled on the following morning.

She found Lady Robina Somerville, though always pensive, more than usually serious and melancholy.

"I half repent," said she, "the promise which I have made you: it is almost unchristian to unfold, particularly on suspicion only, the evil actions of a fellow-creature. It is one of the gospel doctrines to judge as we would be judged. None can actually say that Lady Valville was guilty. Wretched woman must she be, if plunged into iniquity so unparalleled

as to become the destroyer of the innocent: to strike at once at the very root of the happiness of the beings who were cherishing her with affection and friendship."

"No Deletia," continued her ladyship seriously, after a pause of some minutes, "it is not possible that human nature can be so debased. Even the robber is too noble-minded to betray a confidence reposed in him: he would not violate that confidence; how then can we suppose such premeditated treachery could dwell in the bosom of a youthful female, the chosen friend of your mother's heart."

"Alas!" replied Deletia, "only those indeed who know Lady Valville, as I know her, could guess, could suspect her of such iniquity. But, oh! Lady Robina, I possess proofs against her that bring too strong confirmation of her guilt. Lord Valville, indeed, had torn part of the fragment, yet the most

remains of what I found in the fishing-house. Read the affecting relic."

She took from her pocket-book the following scrap.

"*Only slow poison could possibly have effected the dire event which, in robbing me of my Deletia, has rendered existence insupportable. Oh! how in nature is it possible to live with a creature who has outraged every feeling of humanity. Worse than the hyena is this female monster. Oh! may I in mercy be forgiven, for my very brain turns giddy, and I can exist no longer.*

"*Yet my precious child, my little smiling Deletia. — To heaven I consign her — she will be protected.*"

"The first six lines which your ladyship has read of the affecting fragment, I transcribed from memory — for that was the part which Lord Valville destroyed. — But no wonder he did so, when conscious guilt overwhelmed and criminated his mother."

Lady Robina was greatly affected with this touching and melancholy transcript of Mr. Granville's feelings. She wept almost as much as his desolate daughter. Her ladyship rose and took from the cabinet a letter, which she presented to Deletia. She was unable to address any conversation to her, and put it into her hands in silence. It was as follows:

"To the Countess of Dorringcourt.

"My beloved Friend,

"I feel a melancholy presentiment that this will be the last testimony of your Deletia's friendship which you will ever receive.

"I have an inward sensation which tells me that I am about to die. Do not smile at what the world deem low-spirited nervousness, for what I suffer is not of that description, but that suffering will eventually prove fatal. I would fain conceal from my anxious and distressed husband the acute pain which sometimes

seizes me so suddenly as almost to deprive me of reason. Then it ceases for a while, and I seem to be restored to partial existence, for

> "Life but feebly flutters o'er my heart,
> E'en as a wounded bird upon her nest."

"Do not laugh, my dear Charlotte, at my strange surmises; but I could almost fancy that slow poison is administered in my food. — If I had any secret enemy, or knew any person whom I had injured, I should not hesitate to feel assured it was the case. But oh no! — I possess only the tenderest friends around me. Nothing can be more gentle, more soothing, more anxiously kind, than my sweet Gertrude. She will not allow any other person to administer the medicines which I take. I often think they disagree, and sometimes I evade swallowing them; but my tender friend says I shall not be well without, and therefore I yield to her persuasion.

"This strange disease has been creeping upon me for some time. It affects me with such general debility, I cannot walk as formerly with my precious Granville; and he bitterly complains, that he has no enjoyment in his rambles without his wife. My head too, at times, is so confused, I feel as if my senses were deserting me; and I often withdraw to my own apartment to conceal the terrible sensations which come over me. I, however, during these absences, make Gertrude supply my place; and she has all that captivation and vivacity in her manners and conversation, that wins the esteem of Granville, and renders her so amusing and engaging a companion.

"I wish, Charlotte, that you saw my beautiful little girl, — sweet smiling innocent! She twines her infant arms around my neck, and presses her cherub face to my cheek; and, with her pretty playful smiles, almost rends my heart, when I think how soon the time will arrive,

when no mother's tenderness will guide her innocent childhood; or direct her paths in riper years.

"Oh! my friend, if you survive me, look with an eye of friendship on my desolate and darling girl. Gertrude does not love children. She is divested of tenderness to every person, except myself; and I will not bequeath my precious babe to one who knows not well how to supply the loss she, alas! will too soon sustain. And, besides, when I sleep on the pillow of death, Gertrude can no longer dwell at the Abbey; for, though Granville regards her with the affection of a sister, her mind is too pure to entertain a sentiment in his favour inimical to my happiness.

"Farewell, my Charlotte. Oh! protect with your friendship my poor desolate babe; and render you doubly blessed in your own beauteous offspring!

"DELETIA GRANVILLE."

No doubt could now be entertained, on comparing the fragment and the letter, that Lady Valville had been the destroyer of Deletia's mother. She resolved never to see her ladyship any more; but she told Lady Robina, she would take no steps to bring the matter to light; for as Lady Valville was unhappily the widow of her father, she held his memory in too much respect to cast such opprobrium upon one so closely allied to him; and that no purpose could now be effected, except more deeply to lacerate her bosom by the absolute conviction of her guilt.

Deletia requested the favour of Lady Robina, to narrate to her all the circumstances which she knew of her mother's history.

"Alas!" replied she, "I can tell you nothing more than you already know. A juvenile friendship had been formed between Lady Deletia Vere and Miss Anesley, my mother, which was always

kept alive, though the early marriages of both ladies had prevented afterwards much personal intercourse, for Lady Deletia went abroad with Mr. Granville; and, on her return, Lady Dorringcourt fell into such delicate health, she never visited the Abbey. I fancy, from what I can gather from their correspondence, my mother died of a consumption; and, for the last four years of her life, we resided with her at Lisbon.

"Here are, however, more letters of Lady Deletia's, to which you have, my dear Miss Granville, a just claim. Perhaps the contents will give you further insight into the history of your family, and those characters who have acted too conspicuous a part in it, for your happiness."

Deletia gratefully received the valuable packet of letters; and retired with much painful emotion to her own room.

Deletia, as she unfolded these precious letters, bedewed them with tears. The

most of them were dated from Paris. One of the first which she perused contained the following detail.

"At the château of the Marquis d'A——, I met with a most captivating young creature, with whom Granville is as much enchanted as myself; she is full of *belle esprit,* and has manners at once so insinuating and persuasive, I should like to spend all my days in her society. She is extremely handsome. There is something so very grand in her air, she might pass for a queen, so dignified, yet so full of grace is her deportment. She is remarkably entertaining; abounds in anecdote; and is so well acquainted with the French court, she perpetually amuses.

"This Lady Valville, as she is called, has been a widow about a year. She has one little boy. I understand that her circumstances are very slender, for her husband was a dissipated man; and she

is come here on a plan of economy. She has a large acquaintance, which does not surprise me, for her wit, her gaiety, and her music, in which she greatly excels, is the delight of all circles.

"I am not apt, Charlotte, to take sudden fancies or partialities to strangers, but this sprightly young widow has actually bewitched me. However, not me alone, Granville is as extraordinarily captivated with her as myself, and he seems to be half inclined to invite her to accompany us to England when we return thither."

Ah! thought Deletia, as she finished the letter, how fatal this partiality, the prepossession of my unsuspecting parents, for this alluring woman.

The contents of the next letter to Lady Dorringcourt, on the subject of Lady Valville, ran thus:—

"You, dearest Charlotte, who are

so prudent, so cautious, will, I am afraid, condemn the step which I have taken, in having actually invited Lady Valville as our guest to accompany us to England. Poor thing! She has shown such deep concern at the bare idea of parting with us, all her vivacity fled, and I continually surprised her in tears; so much did she seem to take to heart our separation. I also compassionate her situation, banished from her home, her country, her friends, from motives of prudence, that, by economizing, she might be able to make a proper provision for her boy, is so praise-worthy, and discovers such noble maternal feelings, I am delighted with the prospect of being able to bestow any mark of friendship on so excellent a creature.

"I should be afraid, with her beauty, taste for society, and sprightly disposition, the sequestration of Granville Abbey would be ill suited to Lady Valville's taste, if I had not seen that she prefers

the solitary society of those she regards to all the gaiety of the French court, so brilliant at this time; and that even the variety of diversions which Paris affords, are cheerfully relinquished to pass a quiet evening with Granville and myself."

"The bustle of public life is not suited either to my taste or habits, more particularly at this season, when the least fatigue or exertion overcomes me. I now long to be at home, and once more wandering amidst the lovely scenes of Clovelly, in my own tranquil and secluded pleasure-grounds. In Paris one cannot stir in any corner, except in a crowd. I pant for the refreshing breezes wafted from the sea towards our beetling cliffs."

"That I may taste the air, I go and sit by the hour in the magnificent gardens of the Tuileries. They are full of taste and decoration, embellished with flowers, groves of orange-trees, sculpture, and refreshing fountains; but yet

I miss the simple natural beauties of the scenes at home. In Paris it is impossible to retire into one's self — it is full of tumult, noise, and bustle. It is true, every body looks happy — but it is like the happiness of a gala day, unaccompanied by reason and reflection."

"Sometimes we drive to Versailles, and St. Cloud. At the former, the grand and petit Trianon, or palaces of taste, built in the oriental style, combine all that art and fancy can suggest to render them beautiful and attractive.

"The magnificent palace of Versailles covers a vast space of ground, and surrounded by fine terraces, in stately pomp may vie with any in Europe; but it is too uniform to be perfectly elegant; too heavy to possess taste; and one looks at the palace as a heavy pile of building, which is rather formed to excite wonder than admiration. The gardens are extensive, superb, and formal. The fountains shed a refreshing coolness, and toss their

spiral waters in sparkling beauty to a prodigious height."

"I prefer St. Cloud to Versailles; there is a variety, and a degree of rural appearance in these grounds, which we in vain look for, either in the Tuileries or at Versailles. Long and magnificent avenues of trees spread along the banks of the Seine, which beautifully winds through the valley; and pretty swelling hills, cloathed with woods, diversify the too flat uniformity which is seen in the environs of Paris. St. Cloud stands on a fine elevation embowered in trees."

"But after all, my dear Charlotte, I see nothing in picturesque beauty to compare to our own Clovelly. Magnificent objects strike the eye, it is true, with wonder and admiration; but so little idea of happiness is attached to these abodes of grandeur, even their possessors are glad to withdraw from them to taste the simpler charms of life."

The last letter which named Lady Valville, that Deletia perused, was as follows, and dated from Granville Abbey.

"Oh! how delightful, my friend, are the reposing beauties of Granville Abbey, which we now are tasting in all the full luxuriance and pensive beauty of autumn, after the tumult of Paris."

"We have brought Lady Valville with us, and her little boy. If it be possible, she is even here more delightful than she was in France. I was afraid she would be *ennui* in this retired place; but, on the contrary, she seems to possess a greater flow of vivacity than formerly; she enlivens us both exceedingly, and is ready to walk, ride, sing, read, or join in any of our rural pastimes with a good-humoured obligingness that daily wins our affection."

"But you, my dear Charlotte, not merely express something like regret

and apprehension, on the subject of Lady Valville; but rally me for my suddenly-formed partiality for Gertrude, and add, 'that without being uncharitable you cannot avoid entertaining some suspicion that this newly-chosen friend is too insinuating to be perfectly sincere; that alluring as her manners and conversation prove, you think the tenderness which she displays is artificial; for seldom characters, such as I describe Gertrude's to be, have much genuine sentiment or feeling in their composition.

" It is not like the native liberality of my Charlotte to add, you think such a young woman a dangerous person to throw into the society of my husband.

" Oh! did you really know Granville, such an idea would never for an instant have arisen in your bosom. His heart and conduct always act in unison. They spring from the same source; and to doubt the fidelity and affection of my

husband, would prove me unworthy of a heart so pure. I lament the impossibility of your coming to look at this happy trio. May you, my beloved Charlotte, in adding another babe to your conjugal felicity, be spared to be blessed in your children's children."

The most interesting and important part of the correspondence now closed. Deletia was extremely affected with those parts which related to Lady Valville. A most fatal friendship it had proved, as the Countess of Dorringcourt's penetration and foresight had predicted. The guileless, unsuspicious dispositions of both her parents had become the unhappy victims of her arts. Deletia shuddered as she recollected how nearly she also had fallen into her artful snares; and how entirely from her earliest perceptions she had been under Lady Valville's controul; no wonder in many instances which

Deletia called to remembrance, her ladyship had been appalled by her presence, and at times even overwhelmed with conscious shame, at recollections which crowded upon her.

These letters of Lady Deletia Granville's corroborated every circumstance tending to prove Lady Valville's guilt. Still, however, guilty as she was, Deletia felt a scrupulous delicacy in criminating the wife of a father who was now no more, and who it appeared had precipitated himself into eternity, from the agonising feelings of sorrow and remorse.

As Deletia told Lady Robina she would use no measures to bring to light an event at once so afflicting and terrible, she thought the accusation of Lady Valville's guilty conscience would carry a reproach to her bosom which would eventually sting her to death; and all she now desired was never more to behold either her ladyship or her son.

CHAPTER VI.

Some weeks had now elapsed, since Deletia attained her one-and-twentieth year. Mr. Rutherford wrote to her that as Lady Valville was judged incapable (even if she could be found) of resigning her trust in form, her extraordinary case had been represented, and he was empowered to give her the full possession of her rightful inheritance, at any period she chose to claim it upon coming to town, and return sole mistress of Granville Abbey. Mr. Rutherford however added, that though Lord Valville's present aim was unknown, that as he no doubt was always on the watch, it might be wiser for her to remain a few months longer at Oakley Park; and in the mean time some

intelligence might transpire of Lord Valville and his mother, who, there was no question, were waiting for a favourable opportunity again to entrap her.

Granville Abbey had always proved to Deletia such a scene of perpetual misery, though a sentiment of attachment accompanied her early associations with the place, she yet felt no present desire to either claim the inheritance of her father's, or to return to its splendid possession.

At Oakley Park alone seemed to centre Deletia's happiness. Peace lighted on her pillow; she rose only to joy; she retired at night, but to renew with the morning the same series of enjoyment; and thus glided away the early part of summer.

Lord Dorringcourt beheld daily in Deletia new excellencies to admire and to fix his affection. He found her patient and resigned under her present calamities; and though her heart had been

deeply lacerated by the mournful fate of her parents, she bore her sufferings without murmuring. Her beauty and misfortunes first excited his tenderness and compassion, his heart early yielded to the impression which they had made upon him; but now his regard was established on the permanent basis of the experience of her goodness, from constant intercourse, when every thought was unfolded in her ingenuous mind, and the sweetness of her disposition shone conspicuous in all her actions.

Both his lordship's sisters observed with satisfaction the growing attachment between their brother and Delctia.

Lady Elinor no longer rallied them on the subject. She saw that the happiness of each depended on such a union of taste and affection; but she likewise foresaw the difficulties to be encountered, with the opposition her brother would inevitably meet from Lord Valville, and she trembled at the bare idea of what might

eventually prove the issue of his bold rivalry.

Lord Dorringcourt was even more painfully sensible of the difficulties which would naturally arise to impede their union, even if Deletia acceded to his proposals. He however determined, at a favourable opportunity, to venture to express to Miss Granville the ascendancy she had gained over his affections, and to breathe a latent wish that she would favour his addresses.

Soon after this determination, Lord Dorringcourt found Deletia sitting, pensive and alone, in the drawing-room. He approached and addressed her.

"You look sad and thoughtful, dearest Miss Granville," said he, advancing with emotion. "I hope that no new cause has arisen to disturb a mind naturally at peace with itself. Oh! if any thing distresses or renders you unhappy, confide, sweetest Deletia, your cares in the bosom of one who warmly partici-

pates in your every joy and sorrow, who loves you with the tenderest affection."

Deletia, surprised, penetrated, but overwhelmed with confusion at this unexpected declaration of Lord Dorringcourt's, for some moments, felt at a loss to reply; at length, she said, while the colour mounted to her cheek, "Why, my lord, should I transfer to another those mournful thoughts, which sometimes I find it impossible to chace from my mind? Happy as I am in the society of such a family, and ungrateful as I must appear for being so pensive, when not a wish of my heart in your house remains unsatisfied; yet, my lord, when I think of what may be my future destiny through life, though at present liberated from my tie to Lord Valville; how he may still follow, still persecute me through every period of my existence, what are all the possessions of Granville Abbey, while they prove the

fatal allurement to still draw him after me?"

"Revert not," cried Lord Dorringcourt, with fervour, "sweetest Deletia, to the past, only let us consider the future. Crush not my fondest hopes and expectations; consent but to be mine, and who shall presume, or have authority to tear you from me!"

"Alas!" replied the weeping and subdued Deletia, "the request, my lord, with which you honour me, I have no power to accept or decline; and, deeply as I am penetrated by your distinguished preference, it yet is impossible to listen to proposals so full of danger to yourself, however my inclination might prompt me to accede!"

"Tell me," cried Lord Dorringcourt, taking Deletia's hand, "and tell me candidly, loveliest and amiable Miss Granville, was there no Lord Valville to alarm you with timid apprehension, would you accede to my wishes? Could I hope

that you do not view me with indifference, and would trust your future happiness to my keeping; life I think would become almost too precious, for it would be made up of such a scene of bliss, as does not fall to the lot of humanity.

"Oh! speak, friend of my soul, my beloved Deletia," cried his lordship, with anxious solicitude.

"Were I, my lord," replied Deletia, much affected by the ardent declaration of Lord Dorringcourt, "to speak as I think, then would my words overflow with tenderness and gratitude."

"And if there was no cause in your opinion to impede our union, you would consent to be mine?"

"Can you doubt it?" answered the subdued Deletia.

"Then," replied the delighted Dorringcourt, "nothing shall impede it. Lord Valville may profess to have a prior claim; but now, angelic Miss Granville, that you are of age, no marriage cere-

mony, interrupted as your's was, can prove legal; and you have power to dispose of your hand, according to your own discretion. We will, however, have higher authority than our own to act upon, in an affair of so much importance.

"Will you, dearest Miss Granville, consent, having now encouraged, my fondest expectation, to accompany Robina and myself to London to-morrow, when I shall take such steps as will empower me ultimately to obtain the honour of your hand?"

Deletia, having once acknowledged to Lord Dorringcourt that he was not indifferent to her, was superior to any such scruples with respect to using those measures which it was absolutely necessary to take to effect their union. He drew from her a consent to go immédiately to town, accompanied by his lordship's elder sister. For the sake of privacy, he proposed putting them in private lodg-

ings, and going himself to an hotel, instead of their all occupying his lordship's house in St. James's Square.

Deletia agitated, oppressed by the declaration of Lord Dorringcourt's sentiments, found herself quite unequal even to the society of his sisters. She immediately withdrew to her apartment, and sent her excuses for not appearing at dinner.

Lord Dorringcourt went from the drawing-room in search of Lady Robina, to whom he at once unfolded all that had passed, and solicited the indulgence of her presence and countenance to Deletia in London. On such an occasion, her ladyship would not withhold her society, and she cheerfully assented to her brother's wishes.

Though Lord Dorringcourt was half afraid of the raillery of Lady Elinor, he notwithstanding communicated to her the proposals he had just made to Deletia.

"Miss Granville is worthy of you, brother," cried she, with smiles of pleasure. — "I always suspected how it would be," she added significantly. — "I must go and salute my new sister." — She ran away, and tapped at Deletia's door.

"Always the sister of my heart," exclaimed her ladyship, affectionately embracing her, "you will soon, I hope, be really so, my beloved Deletia, as the wife of Dorringcourt. — Come, come, none of your pretty becoming blushes. — My brother has just told me I am to have a new sister; and that he has selected one who does honour to his choice."

"Lord Dorringcourt," said Deletia, "has indeed bestowed on me a high distinction in so flattering a preference; — but ah! dear Lady Elinor, something whispers me, notwithstanding, some cruel circumstance will yet separate us for ever."

"None of your gloomy omens. Who,

or what should separate you?—My brother will have able counsel; and as for that vile Lord Valville, depend on it, the wicked are not suffered, except for a time, to triumph."

Lady Elinor laughed Deletia out of her present taste for solitude, and insisted on her going down to dinner.

The following morning, at an early hour, Lord Dorringcourt, Lady Robina Somerville, and Deletia, set out in a hired carriage for London. Lady Elinor remained at Oakley Park, to take care of her sister's children.

CHAPTER VII.

DELETIA entered the metropolis with very different sensations to those which she experienced on a former occasion. In Lord Dorringcourt and his sisters alone, centered a little world of happiness. She had been assured, that she constituted his, and, Oh! how largely did he make up the sum of her's.

They drove to spacious apartments in Pall-Mall. His lordship having seen his sister and Deletia safely lodged, immediately went to Chancery-lane, to wait upon Mr. Rutherford. Lord Dorringcourt found him at home. Without reserve, he opened his whole heart to him; and concluded with assuring him, that his union with Miss Granville could

alone form his future happiness through life."

Mr. Rutherford, having heard with delight his lordship's partiality for Deletia, said, "that no effort on his part should be wanting, to promote the means of their union; at the same time, he must be candid in adding, that from Lord Valville's prior claim, their marriage could not possibly take place, until the case was referred to legal decision, and if that decision was given in his favour, of which he entertained no doubt, his lordship might then fairly bid defiance to whatever future violence Lord Valville might practise."

Lord Dorringcourt enquired of Mr. Rutherford, if he knew where Valville now was, and if he considered their remaining quietly secluded for a time in town, a safe measure, as it was necessary to take Deletia's deposition, in some instances of her singular case.

Mr. Rutherford informed his lordship,

that he learnt from Mr. Benson, a brother solicitor, that Lord Valville, not having been able to discover the place of Miss Granville's retreat, and Lady Valville's having suddenly departed from town no one knew whither, there did not appear to be the least risk in remaining in London, and certainly the doing so would expedite their cause.

Lord Dorringcourt, anxious to be himself on the spot, resolved to embrace Mr. Rutherford's opinion.

As it was possible their stay would now be retarded some weeks, his lordship prevailed on Lady Robina Somerville, (who was doing violence to her own inclination, in remaining so long from her children,) to go with Deletia into a comfortable ready-furnished house, affording them the use of servants from his own establishment, whilst he took up his abode in St. James's-Square. Consideration for the delicacy of Deletia's feelings, and the usages of the world,

induced him to conform to this measure.

Mr. Rutherford lost no time in visiting his young favourite, Miss Granville; whose improved health and spirits he saw with pleasure. Nor had Deletia forgotten, that she ultimately owed her present happiness to Mr. Rutherford's kind consideration, in providing her a home when she had none to shelter her. He inquired after Mademoiselle Maublanc, who, gay as a lark, was left at Oakley Park to amuse Lady Robina's children, who doated upon her.

Mr. Rutherford used the most vigilant measures, to represent and forward Miss Granville's cause; but it was difficult to decide upon, and nothing but suspense hung over their destiny.

Lord Dorringcourt assured that Valville was on the continent, and anxious to divert Deletia's mind, which, with every effort on her part to support her spirits, sometimes sunk into despond-

ence, proposed showing her some of the places of public amusement in town.

Always timid and apprehensive of encountering Valville, though certain that he was out of the kingdom, she declined Lord Dorringcourt's offer; but when she perceived by doing so, that he always devoted his evenings to his sister and herself, she thought there appeared a feeling so entirely selfish in wholly engrossing his society, she at last yielded a reluctant consent to accompany him to Drury-lane theatre, to see Garrick.

At this period the drama was in meridian splendour, for the stage presented such powerfully combined attractions in a Garrick, a Woffington, a Clive, a Cibber, as scarcely can be conceived by those whose experience has been directed by the comparative darkness and degeneracy of modern times.*

* In the magnificent constellation of talent which it was the privilege of that age to witness, it is pleasing to recall to memory the first appear-

ance of one bright peculiar star, which has lately sunk beneath our horizon.

When Roscius was in the plenitude of former fame, a new and youthful candidate appeared in *Miss Pope*, who, without pretensions, and apparently without effort, quietly stole into that celebrity which was the pledge of her future pre-eminence. From her first introduction she discovered herself to be the pupil of nature. Her manner was characterised by that arch but plausible simplicity which wins belief, and which so successfully conceals art, as even to appear to disclaim premeditation. Whatever character she assumed, she appropriated to herself with a chaste yet graceful propriety, of which no other actress has offered so perfect an example. She possessed a native fund of humour, and there was something undefinable in her look, her voice, her air, that baffled criticism, and even suspended admiration, in the fulness of enjoyment.

This observation applies but to comedy, to which the extent of modern theatres is utterly destructive. Till lately Mrs. Siddons sustained the dignity of Melpomene; and Mr. Kean has almost created a new art. Those who are truly sensible to his transcendant merits, may easily be persuaded they behold in him, for the first time, a real master of the stage.

CHAPTER VIII.

Having now without danger seen, through the attentive kindness of Lord Dorringcourt, both the theatres and Marybone gardens, Deletia, when she found his lordship seemed to enjoy showing the various places of entertainment, consented to join a party which he wished to form for them to Ranelagh.

It was the first week of June; and though the town was thinning very fast, much company still remained. A fashionable milliner equipped Lady Robina and Deletia with elegance and taste. The simple grace of Deletia's appearance rendered her conspicuously beautiful. Lord Dorringcourt, who had never seen her before with a dress that seemed to

add new charms to her person and figure, gazed on her with admiration. As he handed her to the carriage he said, "Always lovely, my Deletia, you yet this evening seem so entirely decorated with taste and yet simplicity, I never till now supposed one charm more could be added to beauty I thought unequalled."

Deletia modestly replied, "Your approbation, my lord, of the decoration of my person, as well as the decoration of a mind you have not thought unworthy your esteem, will ever be my proudest ambition to retain in possession."

"Excellent Deletia!" cried he, pressing the hand which he held to his lips. "Who so diffident, yet so noble in sentiment as yourself? What are the charms of your person, radiant as you are in beauty, to that loveliness of mind which, as it is unfolded each day, discovers some new virtue, some new perfection o excite and increase my love and admiration."

The road leading to Ranelagh was lined on each side with trees, from which lamps were suspended, and had a very novel and pleasing effect. But when Deletia entered the rotunda brilliantly illuminated with festoons of richly variegated coloured lamps, and crowded with persons to the number of two thousand, all well and gaily dressed, promenading in elegant groups, to the sound of music, Deletia almost fancied herself transported to one of those enchanted palaces described in Spencer's Fairy Queen, filled with the sons and daughters of Pleasure; for all care seemed to be banished from these gay figures.

Lord Dorringcourt and Lady Robina Somerville met several of their acquaintances, who sometimes joined their party during two or three turns in the rotunda: but Lady Robina early became weary and faint with the heat. When the tea was ended, she proposed to her brother going home, and leaving Miss Granville

under the care of Mrs. and Miss Lennox; but Deletia insisted on returning with her, and they took leave of their friends, who wished to remain longer.

On quitting the rotunda, a party of gay fashionable young men, laughing and talking very loud, were just entering. The voice of the centre one electrified Deletia. It was Lord Valville's. She cast her eyes wildly around, gave an involuntary shriek, and fainted in Lady Robina's arms, who had presence of mind to catch hold of and prevent her from falling.

Lord Dorringcourt had only left them the instant before, to order his carriage to be called up; for the company were more eagerly pressing into Ranelagh than departing.

Valville, not perfectly sober, and rushing impetuously forward with the crowd, fortunately for Deletia, passed her totally unheeded. He just caught a glimpse of two ladies, as they brushed past him;

but as Lady Robina Somerville was the one next to him, and in some degree obscured Deletia in making way, he had not the smallest recognition of her person. In any place where it had appeared possible to meet Deletia, she could not have been so easily overlooked.

One of Valville's companions, however, who heard the sudden shriek, turned to whence the voice proceeded, and the next minute he saw the lady sinking. He loosened the hold of his lordship, and politely approaching, offered his assistance; whilst Valville, and the other three gentlemen went towards the rotunda. He ran to the anti-room for a glass of water, which he was presenting to the insensible Deletia, just as Lord Dorringcourt came back to announce that the carriage was waiting. Shocked and surprised at the state in which he beheld Deletia, he inquired, with apprehension and alarm, the occa-

sion of her sudden illness, which, however, was only known at present to herself.

The gentleman who had afforded her assistance was slightly known to Lord Dorringcourt, to whom he bowed and spoke.

"The young lady," said Colonel Maynard, "appears to be reviving; and as I cannot leave her in better hands than your lordship's and Lady Robina Somerville's, I will take my leave, for Valville will be seeking me all over the rotunda."

"Valville, said you?" exclaimed Lord Dorringcourt, trembling with dismay, and turning pale as death.

An adventure abounding with such imminent danger, and so totally unlooked for, almost suspended Lord Dorringcourt's senses.

Not a moment was to be lost in quitting Ranelagh ere they were discovered and overtaken. He carried the almost life-

less Deletia to his coach, where, sinking on Lady Robina's shoulder, she remained insensible for some minutes.

"My precious Deletia," exclaimed Lord Dorringcourt, half frantic with alarm and terror, "Oh! awake to a sense of consciousness; for be assured that none shall approach to harm you while life is left me to protect you."

"Thank heaven," cried she, "opening her eyes at the sound of a voice so full of anxiety and tenderness, "you are safe. Oh! fly from the presence of Lord Valville. Let us go to the most distant part of the globe, rather than be in danger of his pursuit; for where he is, only death and woe can dwell."

When Deletia was somewhat recovered, she related to her friends her accidental rencontre with Valville. From escaping immediate pursuit, she flattered herself she was not recognized, consequently not discovered. It was the case; but not

so fortunate was likely to prove the termination of this unhappy adventure; when Lord Dorringcourt suddenly called to his recollection, (which he carefully concealed from Deletia,) that Colonel Maynard, one of the gentlemen of Lord Valville's party, was known to him. He foresaw the most distressing persecution likely to follow, when Valville had knowledge of Deletia's being in town.

No steps for further security could be taken before the morning. That Lord Dorringcourt might not increase Miss Granville's terror and uneasiness, his lordship assumed an apparent indifference on the subject, which he found it the more difficult to support, as his spirits were weighed down with apprehension.

When Colonel Maynard found Valville, he made an apology for his absence. "I have been tendering my services," said he, to the most angelic creature I ever beheld. Dorringcourt is a happy

fellow; for, when the young lady, who had fainted, opened her eyes, she cast on him a look of such ineffable sweetness, upon my soul, I quite envied him."

"What are you talking about, Maynard?" cried Valville, now perfectly sobered by what he just heard. "Dorringcourt, said you? and of whom do you speak, in the lady you described?" added he, breathless with agitation.

"Devil take me, if I know. I never saw the heavenly creature before; all I can tell you is, that she belonged to Dorringcourt's party, and was supported by his sister, Lady Robina Somerville."

"Did you not hear her name?" cried Valville, with impatient violence. "You will drive me frantic, if you cannot satisfy me."

Colonel Maynard paused a minute; "No, no, I cannot tell you the young lady's name; but I think Lady Robina

called her De - - De - - -. Upon my soul I cannot remember."

"Deletia was it?" stammered out Valville, almost breathless. "By Heaven!" clasping his hands together in wild emotion, "Dorringcourt shall pay for this."

"What," said the colonel, laughing, "has the cold, phlegmatic Dorringcourt run off with your Dulcinea? I give his lordship credit for possessing some taste."

Valville heard him not. He rushed from his party as if pursued by the furies; and, throwing himself into his carriage, drove immediately to town; but, when he reached it, he knew not whither to go, and, in a transport of rage, he walked up and down his apartment the most of the night, raving like a madman.

Valville had gone, as Mr. Benson said, to the continent, after losing all hope of tracing Deletia, in search of his mo-

ther; who wrote to him from Calais, that she was then on her way to a convent, in which it was her intention to pass the remainder of her life; but, at present, she declined mentioning either the name or the place in which it was situated. Hereafter he should hear from her again.

Valville, alike listless and unhappy in every spot, tried change of kingdom in hopes of dispelling his chagrin; but, ever pursued by the image of Deletia, after spending a month at Paris, he again returned to England, as the most probable place to discover Miss Granville's retreat; for he was aware she had now been of age some weeks, and, therefore, he reflected, that it was more than probable some intelligence of her would be obtained at Granville Abbey.

Valville had that day been dining with a party of young officers in St. James's-street, who had prevailed upon him to

accompany them to Ranelagh. Such was the event which led, after fruitless anxiety and vigilance, to the discovery of Deletia.

CHAPTER IX.

Lord Dorringcourt, who, as well as Deletia, had passed a sleepless night, rose very early, and, with the most painful apprehension for her safety, that no time might be lost, was, before eight o'clock, in Chancery-lane.

He found Mr. Rutherford sitting down to breakfast. His lordship declined partaking; and, after anxiously waiting till he had finished, he withdrew with Lord Dorringcourt into his office.

His lordship acquainted him with the unfortunate adventure the evening before at Ranelagh, and again sought his advice with respect to Miss Granville.

Mr. Rutherford strongly advised her immediate removal. "Every hour,"

added he, " that Miss Granville remains in London, she is in the most imminent peril of again falling into the hands of Lord Valville; for until it appears that he has no legal claim to her, it is at present impossible to prevent any measures he may think fit to pursue again to claim her. A rencontre now, my lord, might be attended with the most distressing, not to say fatal, consequences; therefore I advise your getting immediately to a distance."

" But whither would you have Miss Granville go? If London is unsafe, surely Oakley Park would be even more so. Shall she return to my aunt in the Isle of Wight? For myself, as a peer of the British realm, my own residence, either in town or country, can remain no secret; therefore, if Lord Valville insists on an *eclaircissement*, I must abide the consequence."

" It is very grievous," replied Mr. Rutherford, " to drive poor Miss Gran-

ville from place to place, and yet it is unavoidable. She certainly cannot return to Oakley Park, nor to Lady Barbara Arden's, for any permanency. I know only one resource; but I am sure your lordship will be averse from it. Yet desperate cases admit alone of desperate remedies."

"What mean you, sir?"

"That Miss Granville must not remain in the kingdom, nor return to it before the matter is finally settled, whether Lord Valville has, or has not, a right to claim her."

"Miss Granville's deposition," continued Mr. Rutherford, "is now given before the court of Chancery. Lord Valville, consequently, will be called upon in due course. Therefore, as the affair rests, I by all means recommend Miss Granville's separating from your lordship's family, at least from yourself."

"I see at once the propriety of your advice," replied he, "and as far as

concerns myself, we will separate till finally united. It scarcely appears a necessary measure for Miss Granville to leave the kingdom."

"It is not absolutely necessary," said Mr. Rutherford, "but yet it would be far wiser if it can be carried into effect. It is almost as unreasonable as the one I am going to make; but if, my lord, you could prevail on your sisters to accompany Miss Granville for a few weeks to the continent, it would not be an unpleasant excursion for them during the summer, and by the autumn I have no doubt that something decisive will take place. When Benson informs Lord Valville of the active measures going forward, to set aside his claim, there is little danger of his departing from the spot. The anxiety and apprehension of losing his cause will keep him here."

"Your lordship must foresee Lord Valville will hunt you from place to place on the present occasion. Return

not then to Oakley Park; but again take Miss Granville to Lady Barbara Arden's to embark from thence for France. If your sisters cannot be prevailed upon to accompany Miss Granville, my sister, Mrs. Clinton, shall attend her along with Mademoiselle Maublanc, whose relations live in Normandy."

If it was absolutely requisite to send Deletia for a time out of the kingdom, Lord Dorringcourt felt such painful apprehension of totally losing sight of her, when under the protection of strangers, he determined to use no influence untried to prevail upon his sister, Lady Robina, to go with Miss Granville for the short space of a few weeks.

The commiseration which she had shown for Deletia's peculiar misfortunes, together with the recollected friendship existing between their mothers, and her ladyship's knowledge of some of the mournful events in the life of Lady Deletia Granville, he thought would all

powerfully avail in favouring his proposal.

No creature could be more entirely devested of every selfish consideration than Lady Robina Somerville. She delighted in acts of benevolence. She would on every necessary occasion cheerfully forego her own gratifications if she could ultimately, by so doing, tend to benefit another. Even if such had not been the happy temper of her mind, she would have thus acted from the impulse of principle, and those rules of Christianity which she made the guide of her life.

Lord Dorringcourt knew such to be her sentiments, and therefore he entertained little doubt of succeeding.

His lordship, with truth and candour, simply stated to his sister the opinion delivered by Mr. Rutherford on the subject of Miss Granville, and of the painful separation necessary to take place.

Lady Robina heard her brother with

the most serious attention. She pitied and sympathised in the anguish he discovered; and when he had finished speaking, "I guess," interrupted she, in a voice of soothing kindness, "what you would say. I read, my dearest brother, your wishes, your anxious solicitude for Miss Granville, in your countenance. To remove at once your distress, I will accompany Deletia. Elinor will take care of my children during the short period of our absence. We will immediately proceed from hence to the Isle of Wight, where we will only wait for Mademoiselle Maublanc, who will be absolutely necessary to us, nor do I suppose Miss Granville would go without her. When she arrives we will sail from the island to Havre-de-Grace, as the most convenient place to disembark, for I have heard Victoire say her family are of that province."

Lord Dorringcourt poured forth the warmest acknowledgments to his sister

for the important act of friendship which she had rendered him.

"But who," said he, with fervour, "except our own Deletia, is half so excellent as my sister Robina!"

It was arranged they should go that evening one stage of the journey on their way to the Isle of Wight. There had been no time to give Lady Barbara Arden intimation of the intended visit, but his lordship knew that his aunt would pardon its abruptness when informed of the occasion.

Lord Dorringcourt was to return into Warwickshire, and send Victoire in the care of his trusty housekeeper to them without delay.

The moment was now arrived of the heaviest trial and affliction of Deletia's life. She had been tortured and persecuted by Lady Velville and her son, she had felt at times most unhappy, but now her heart was filled with unutterable anguish, in separating from Lord Dor-

ringcourt. For above two months they had inhabited the same mansion; and their mutual regard had been strengthened into the tenderest affection from the tried experience of each others opinions and dispositions.

Lord Dorringcourt saw in Deletia's character a similarity of taste and sentiment in their pursuits and ideas on most subjects. But there was a rectitude and nobleness of spirit in Deletia, which tended highly to exalt her in his estimation. She possessed much feeling, but it was devested of weakness; for her misfortunes had been of too serious a nature to admit of her giving way to the indulgence of childish sensibility. She had enthusiasm, but it was untinctured with romantic passion, and though her disposition was naturally gentle and timid, she was as firm, where exertion was necessary, as amiably yielding if mistaken in her judgment.

Lord Dorringcourt indulged not a

passion for Deletia which was to change with the season of youth. In her he looked forward (if he was ever to be so blessed as to call her his) for a cherished companion through life, a solace in age, a partner for his heart, in the sober autumn of life, when the ardency and sunshine of youth had sunk into that calm and mellow affection which gilds declining age.

Deletia, on her part, viewed Lord Dorringcourt as a being gifted with all those rare and fine qualities which, even when singly possessed, adorn human nature, but, in being combined in one object, made her set him up as a standard of perfection, and while she almost worshipped as such, she yet remembered he was but human, and though in her eyes divested of most of the frailties incidental to humanity he so wisely concealed her foibles, they were only visible to himself.

Lady Robina's tender frame and meek spirits could not sustain a parting fare-

well between her brother and Deletia. She seriously entreated him, for all their sakes, to permit them to depart without a single adieu.

Lord Dorringcourt had in the morning requested Deletia to write to him constantly and without reserve; and he promised to communicate, from time to time, how Mr. Rutherford proceeded in her affairs. The moment the issue was given in her favour, he assured her that he would hasten over and claim her promised hand.

Lady Robina interdicted for the last hour all conversation; but when his lordship put Miss Granville into the chaise, as he tenderly took leave, he exclaimed "Peace light on you, my beloved Deletia, may angels guard and ever watch over you."

He tore himself away; Deletia sunk back in the chaise, and covering her face with both her hands, found relief in a flood of tears.

CHAPTER X.

With infinite surprise Lady Elinor Arden saw her brother return alone to Oakley Park; and when she observed the sadness of his countenance, and the extreme dejection of his air, she took serious alarm, scarcely having courage to enquire what was become of his sister and Deletia.

"Robina is well, so I hope is Miss Granville," said he, in a mournful accent, "they are both at Barton villa."

Not to increase his sister's evident astonishment and uneasiness, he then related, though with painful effort, all that had happened since their separation. "Mademoiselle Maublanc," he added, "must be prepared for her journey."

Victoire was called into the room. Lord Dorringcourt informed her that she was to go immediately to Normandy with Miss Granville.

She clasped her hands in a transport of joy, and could scarcely restrain her emotions of delight in their presence.

Victoire was quickly ready to set out, accompanied by the house-keeper. The same day that Lord Dorringcourt returned to Oakley Park they commenced their journey to the Isle of Wight.

For the sake of Lady Robina, who had made so great a sacrifice for Deletia, in leaving her children, her home, and her country, she endeavoured to rally her spirits, and to show her gratitude by every possible attention.

Lady Barbara received them with her usual kindness. She informed the worthy curate and his wife that Miss Granville was at Barton Cliff, and desired Mr. Clinton to engage a vessel to carry her niece and Miss Granville to Havre.

Lord Dorringcourt insisted upon an experienced man-servant of his own, who had travelled over the continent, should attend them. Webb and Lady Robina's woman were the only domestics they took along with them.

Lady Elinor Arden possessed so much good humour and happy flow of spirits, her brother could not have had a companion, more calculated to cheer and console him under his present distressed state of mind. The uncertainty of what might be his future destiny with respect to Deletia, hung, with heavy presages of ill, about his heart. Every day he expected to hear from Lord Valville; and, if he thought fit to challenge him, the nature of circumstances were so altered, it would be impossible to decline giving him the satisfaction which he required.

Lord Valville certainly, in the present instance, had cause to be deeply incensed and offended, for the prevailing rivalship between them, and the ascendency

which he had obtained in Miss Granville's affections; together with the proud triumph of her favoured choice. All these were circumstances which, even in a dispassionate mind, would excite anger and resentment. In the fiery and malignant character he possessed, Lord Dorringcourt had every reason to be convinced he would not suffer him to claim Miss Granville's hand with impunity.

Valville paid Mr. Rutherford a menacing visit, not a quarter of an hour after Lord Dorringcourt had taken leave. Mr. Rutherford was not a person to be intimidated by his threats. Without reserve he told his lordship of the proceedings just commenced in the court of Chancery, of which procedure he would, in a few days, have notice in due form; and that, till the council decided the cause, Miss Granville, who had now been a few weeks of age, would be difficult to reclaim.

Valville, on hearing this intelligence, stormed like a madman, and rushed out of the house in a frenzy of passion.

On returning to the hotel where he at present was living, he sat down and wrote to Lord Dorringcourt as follows.

"To the Earl of Dorringcourt.

"Sir,

"It is to your treachery I owe the loss of Miss Granville. From the first hour of your lordship's impertinent interference at Clovelly, I became convinced that you would prove my rival; and intended to precede me in her affections.

"I apply, my lord, to your own conscience, whether such conduct is honourable, or consistent with the fair reputation which your lordship holds in the world, for a man of distinguished integrity?

"I must insist, sir, on the name of Miss Granville's present retreat, and your

relinquishing all those claims you put in for her preference. She is mine, and solely mine; and to dispute my prerogative, may, in the end, be fatal to both.

"I remain,
"Your lordship's
"Obedient servant,
"Hotel
St. James's-street,
June 10. 17—." "VALVILLE.

The above letter was brought by express by Lord Valville's groom, who waited, on the delivery, for a reply.

Lord Dorringcourt, having perused the address with profound attention, wrote to him these few lines.

"To Lord Valville.

"Sir,

"It alone rests with Miss Granville to decide which of us she honours with her preference. The favoured one of her choice, of course, must ultimately

prevail over the other. When the cause now referred to public decision comes to issue, then, my lord, you will know, but not till then, where Miss Granville is to be found.

"I have the honour to remain,

"My lord,

"Your obedient servant,

"DORRINGCOURT.

"Oakley Park,
June 17. 17—."

Valville counted every hour with restless anxiety, until the return of his messenger from Oakley Park. He tore open the letter, when delivered, with eager impatience; he read over and over again the contents, which were marked with that polite caution, which left him no ground to quarrel with Lord Dorringcourt.

Nothing Valville found was now to be done, but to wait in town the issue of the proceedings going forward.

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN Victoire arrived at Barton villa, she flew to Deletia with transport. "Oh! mademoiselle," exclaimed she, "I was quite *au désespoir* at your long absence, and began to think that I should never see you again. Is it really true that we are going to France?—I can hardly contain the joy I feel in returning to my native province, which will make me forget all the *tristesse* which I experienced in the old *château*."

Deletia informed Victoire they were going to embark for Havre-de-Grace with the first fair wind, for every thing was ready for their voyage.

Mr. Clinton engaged a very commodious vessel, and the following day,

when they went on board at Cowes, they had the prospect of a safe and speedy passage.

A light breeze sprang up, and the day proved so beautiful, that Lady Robina, Deletia, and Victoire remained on deck. The sail down to Spithead was enchanting, presenting the green sloping hills of the island, intersected with towns, villages, and elegant villas, and bounded by stupendous cliffs, which fell into the sea; while, on the opposite shores, were distinctly seen the towns of Portsmouth and Gosport.

In twenty-four hours after their embarkation, the highlands of Normandy, as they seemed to blend with the horizon in faint perspective, were just discernable.

Gradually they became more and more distinct, when, on a bold rocky promontory, the elegant light-house, situated two miles from Havre, formed a conspicuous feature in the landscape.

"*Voila, voila, mademoiselle!*" cried Victoire, clasping her hands with rapture — "the province of Normandy."

The approach to Havre, Deletia thought striking, grand, and beautiful. The town is situated at the bottom of a deep bay, bounded, on the south-west side, by high mountains, richly studded with rural villages. As they sailed into port, the noble harbour presented a magnificent combination of objects. The crowded shipping bespoke the opulence and immense commerce of this large town, which may justly be denominated the Liverpool of France, and is the great centre port of Rouen and Paris. Many of the lofty and antique houses spreading along the quay were, in part, composed of wood, running to the height of six or seven stories, with large Venetian windows; and often having two tier of a more ordinary sort in the slated roofs, and frequently poles suspended from them, on which linen was hanging to

dry, had a most novel and extraordinary appearance.

The varied windings of the Seine, flowing through a country of the most luxuriant beauty, rendered Havre an object of great interest, when viewed on the approach, overhung with the woody eminences of the picturesque village of d'Ingourville, with the elegant pavilions of the bourgeois of Havre, surrounded by orchards, and peeping through the trees.

On disembarking, Lady Robina and Deletia were extremely amused with the novelty of the scene; for the air of the place, characteristic dress and appearance of the people, showed immediately a change of country and nation. The fantastic attire of the women and children had, to the eye of a stranger, a sort of masquerade look, so very whimsical was their costume. Victoire's habit in some degree partook of the Norman fashion, but her cap was not so pyra-

midical, nor her lappets so long. The garments, also, were of the gayest mixture; stripe-coloured petticoats, with a different bodice, full sleeves, checked neck-handkerchief, with the bosom ornamented with gold chains, sparkling crosses of coloured gems, and long gold drops suspended from the ears. The little children were habited in the same way, except that a parti-coloured handkerchief, with a sugar-loaf top, was twisted fancifully round their heads. The dress of the men were also as oddly characteristic, for even the striped worsted night-cap was carelessly tossed on one side the head, with an air that was becoming. The light graceful steps of the women, which were dignified, their lively gestures, and volubility of speech, rendered the whole spectacle animated and cheerful, and formed a singular contrast to the dull quietness of England.

After going through the disagreeable

ceremony at the custom-house, they were conducted by Webb to one of the first hotels. Lady Robina, languid, exhausted, and unusually depressed on finding herself so far distant from her children, in vain looked for English comfort. The hotel was one scene of noise, from the loud and rapid vociferation of French tongues, and the perpetual hurry and quick movements of the people, almost made Deletia's head giddy, as they passed through the large court into which they were shut by heavy ponderous gates, up an ever-winding stone stair-case, which terminated in a long gallery, where the man who preceded them unlocked a door, which, throwing open, he obsequiously ushered them into.

Deletia regarded the man with wonder and surprise, when he informed them that the two apartments which went the one into the other, they were to occupy, and were appropriated for the use of a sitting-room and chamber in one.

It was in vain she argued the point with him that they must have the accommodation of a dining-parlour, which he assured her was impossible, for there was not such a room in the hotel, except the one where the *table d'hôte* was held, and where they could dine, if agreeable.

The publicity of the *table d'hôte* neither suited Lady Robina nor Deletia, and the bill of fare of the house was soon after presented to them on a large printed paper, with the price of each single dish attached to its name.

When the man departed Deletia took a survey of their apartments, which, notwithstanding the gay furniture, possessed, in her eyes, a most forlorn and comfortless appearance.

She found the sort of couch which stood under a gaudy canopy, from which hung fine rich silk-fringed drapery, was intended for her bed. The floor, of red brick highly glazed, was without any carpet. The walls were covered with a

tawdry striped and flowered paper of lively colours, and over a most superb chimney-piece of the most exquisitely beautiful variegated marble, of which there was also a slab richly carved and gilded, were placed enormous mirrors of the finest plate-glass.

The rest of the furniture was composed of a sofa and heavy chairs covered with crimson velvet, the feet and elbows also finely gilded. The table, off which they were to eat, did not correspond with the rest of the articles, for it was made of the most ordinary deal, and very clumsily put together.

Lady Robina and Deletia had not been a quarter of an hour alone, when the man again made his appearance, to arrange their beds, in case the demoiselles would like to repose.

Lady Robina requested him to depart and send the *fille de chambre*; and soon after a very pretty brunette, with dark sparkling eyes, came to wait upon them.

Victoire immediately on disembarking, after taking the name of the hotel where Lady Robina and Deletia were to put up, went to the house of her parents, but promised to return to them in the space of a few hours.

Both Lady Robina and Deletia endeavoured to conceal from each other the oppression they felt on their spirits, on finding themselves desolate strangers in a foreign land, separated from their home and friends. Her ladyship, however, resolved not to yield to despondence, but to amuse her friend by trying to vary the scene as much as possible. Though Victoire's family was of inferior degree, they were respectable bourgeois, and Lady Robina intended to cultivate them, persuaded they would be useful and ready in pointing out some house she could engage for a respectable and temporary residence.

CHAPTER XII.

When Victoire returned, she returned not alone, but had her respectable parents along with her.

"I have brought you, Mesdames," said she to Lady Robina, as she entered with a gay air, and holding a hand of each, "*mon père et ma mère;* I thought it would be so strange to you here, such different ways and customs, you would be quite at a loss; Monsieur I know will do his *possible* for you, Madame, and you Mademoiselle."

"*De tout mon cœur,*" said Monsieur Maublanc, adding in a sprightly tone, "ah! my pretty little Victoire is right, I perceive she is as lively as ever, active, and attentive to every body, the

same good child, and such a favourite at home, that if it had not been to please her mother Mr. Dermont should not have taken her away from us. My poor heart danced this morning when my aged eyes beheld her after such an absence!"

Here the happy father could not refrain from embracing Victoirė, and the mother mixed a tear of transport with her delight, which was shared by the Travellers, to whom it was the only moment of happiness since they quitted England. Robina said, "Mademoiselle Victoire, I assure you, Monsieur, is a great favourite with us all."

Monsieur smiled, and most politely bowed.

Madamė Maublanc was an English woman. Though she had now been many years an inhabitant of Normandy, she was as fond as ever of her own country, and every person belonging to it. With cordial respect she rejoiced in the

arrival of the noble strangers, and offered her services.

Lady Robina, anxious to obtain some quiet rural retreat, and to remove with all possible speed from the noise and bustle of the hotel, consulted Monsieur on the subject. With alacrity he promised the next day to be on the look-out, and did not despair of success in finding one of the pavilions at d'Ingourville, which were let sometimes to strangers, and might suit them.

When Victoire's father and mother took leave, it was agreed that Deletia should accompany them in the morning to d'Ingourville, which was too long a walk from Havre for Lady Robina, who was far from being well, to undertake.

The father of Victoire seemed to have numbered between sixty and seventy years (she was the youngest of a numerous family); and his grey hairs nicely parted on his forehead, showed a brow open, noble, and benevolent. His

figure was slight and thin, and had almost the elasticity of youth, there was such rapidity in his movements, yet they were not without grace or even dignity; for Maublanc possessed so much of the high polish of what were the manners of the French of every degree two centuries ago, that he was all *politesse*, compliment, and courtesy. His air and deportment resembled more that of a decayed gentleman than a bourgeois — and even his dress, odd as it appeared, seemed to give him dignity. His hair was tied in a long queue, and over his bald head he wore a cocked hat. His waistcoat was of old-fashioned silk richly flowered, and his frills and ruffles nicely plaited. His step was erect, his countenance fresh and healthful, and such a share of good humour in the expression, as denoted the cheerful and well-disposed turn of his mind.

Maublanc had realised in trade a small property, sufficient to render him independent. His children were all married

well and respectably, and he had retired about a year to a small house in the environs of Havre.

The French are all early risers. Maublanc was at the hotel to attend Deletia before she had taken her coffee. The day was all sunshine and beauty. No smoky atmosphere obscured the town of Havre. The sky was a cloudless azure, and the air so light, Deletia almost insensibly experienced exhilaration of spirits, which seemed irreconcileable with the sorrowful anxiety of her mind.

Maublanc paid Deletia the compliments of the morning in a strain of flattery which seemed rather to belong to a courtier than to a person in ordinary life; but she soon discovered such were the prevailing manners of the people; and if they were not sincere, they possessed the happy art at least of putting one in good humour with one's self.

Victoire and her father had breakfasted at least two hours before. When Deletia

had finished her's and taken leave of Lady Robina, who was not yet risen, Maublanc undertook to conduct her to d'Ingourville, where he had heard of a pretty house which he thought would just suit them.

The prodigious height and gloomy aspect of the houses, with the long, narrow, unpaved and dirty-looking streets they passed through, by no means pleased Deletia. She missed the neatness, the cleanliness of English towns; the tasteful display of the shops which were set off, though with goods less rare and beautiful, yet more inviting to the eye of the purchaser in their exterior appearance. But still the dress of the people pleased her fancy. Every various group she met, seemed formed to adorn a landscape, as the men and women rode laden with every sort of article, on horses or asses, between the panniers which contained them.

As they walked along, Maublanc

diverted Deletia the whole way with his anecdotes and descriptions. The French are great talkers, and it matters not what is their subject, if they are only permitted to talk. But what Maublanc said his countenance gave assurance he meant to be sincere, for his eyes beamed with benevolence, and were at the same time lit up with a brilliancy of expression that bespoke the lively intelligence of his mind; too full of genuine goodness to be any more mistaken than the native urbanity of his manners.

Deletia observed with surprise, as he was conducting her through the streets, he was known to persons of every degree. His hat, with bowing, was not on his head five minutes together. From his native courtesy, he had a smile and a nod for every child, and a cheering word with a sous for every maimed and blind beggar.

Every acquaintance too, whom Vic-

toire met, seemed so happy to see her, addressed her with such kindness, made so many anxious enquiries, that Deletia almost envied those joyful emotions, as she smiled and chattered to every one, who, as they recognised, crowded round her.

After half a hundred salutations and greetings, they at last reached the termination of the most spacious and handsome street they had been in, and approached the barrier surrounded by heavy and impregnable fortifications, terminated by heavy gates at which soldiers were stationed, and divided from the main road by a moat and draw-bridge.

The ugly barriers gave Deletia, as an English woman, an unpleasant sensation of ideal imprisonment, when she understood these gates were closed every night at a stated hour, against each passenger or traveller.

After passing the barrier, the beautiful village of d'Ingourville reposing on a height, formed a prominent object in the

rural scenery, which was composed of a long avenue of noble trees, called the *chaussée*, where innumerable persons were passing along the broad gravel walk; and on either side were stationed stalls containing every description of article the purchaser might fancy. The spot bore much resemblance to a country fair, except that here every thing was conducted with the utmost order and decorum. Those who were weary had opportunity to rest, for the accommodation of a chair was purchased at the easy rate of a sous, and many elderly ladies, drest in their snow-white plaited French night-caps, and flowered cotton cloaks, were tasting the fresh air beneath the shade of the umbrageous trees. Groups of feeble and aged men were likewise here enjoying themselves in social conversation.

The road now took a winding course, up a steep hill, where Deletia remarked to Monsieur, that every person looked

gay and happy, as they sat enjoying the fresh air.

"Yes, mademoiselle," replied he, "our vivacity never deserts us, for our amusements are innocent. Nothing delights a French man or woman more than the sound of the violin, and a merry dance on the green, which you may see every Sunday evening, in various parts around Havre. We know not what is *ennui*, of which you English complain so bitterly. We feel afflictions at the moment, but they do not rest with us; and we never separate ourselves from our wives and children, to go out and eat and drink alone. When the occupation of the day is over, we pass our time in sitting under these trees of a fine summer's evening, with our families and acquaintance, and requiring no other repast than a little fruit-cake or lemonade."

"Innocent, indeed, and delightful," replied Deletia, "are such recreations."

On attaining the height, Deletia found what d'Ingourville promised at a distance, it fully possessed in simple beauty, on a near approach. Partially scattered on the green slopes, rested the small villas or elegant pavilions composed of stone, the front covered with rich fruit-trees, and surrounded by pretty pleasure-gardens. The prospect from this spot was of vast extent, and extremely magnificent. It commanded the town of Havre resting in the plain, with its noble bay, the lovely Seine, meandering through the richly wooded and picturesque shores of Lower Normandy, the distant promontories which surround Caen, with the far-seen villages of Harfleur, with the celebrated castle of Tanquerville.

"Now, Mademoiselle," exclaimed Victoire, "did you ever see any thing half so pretty at Clovelly as this prospect?"

Deletia acknowledged she had rarely

seen any more beautiful, and was really charmed with it.

They saw a small pavilion which she thought would suit Lady Robina. Though the people professed to let it furnished, the rooms looked naked and bare of every convenience, but Maublanc readily undertook to procure what additional furniture was requisite, without loss of time.

In their way home, he insisted on her resting for a quarter of an hour, beneath the fine elm-trees in the chaussée, and left her with Victoire. In a few minutes after Maublanc disappeared, he returned with a basket of large delicious cherries, which he presented with an air of respect to Deletia, and requested her to taste along with his little Victoire.

CHAPTER XIII.

Deletia found Lady Robina much recovered from her indisposition of the former day, and in cheerful spirits. When she described the beautiful spot she had just seen, and the rural situation of their intended abode, "You have," said her ladyship, "taken much trouble for us, Monsieur; and Miss Granville appears so well satisfied with d'Ingourville, that I am persuaded we shall be as happy there, as it is possible to be, separated from our English friends."

"Perhaps," added she, "to-morrow being Sunday, you will have the goodness to go with us to Nôtre Dame, we are what you, Monsieur, call heretics; but yet I have no objection to attend your place of worship."

Maublanc bowed, and said, "he would have the honour of waiting upon them."

The morning of the Sabbath, it was true, was ushered in with the ringing of bells, but the aspect of the town wore no appearance of the repose of Sunday, and devout respect for the sacred day. The carpenters, who were repairing part of the hotel, went on with their work as usual; and song and merriment sounded in every direction. The shops were open, the markets stocked with provisions, and the streets filled with carts and people, carrying on every sort of traffic as on an ordinary week-day.

Lady Robina, who was remarkably serious and pious, was extremely shocked and distressed, not merely at this appearance of indecorum, but such a wanton profanation of the holy day.

"I cannot," said her ladyship, "forbear drawing a comparison between this country and Scotland, respecting the manner in which Sunday is observed.

Even in Paris, how different from Edinburgh! Superstition and pageantry is here the only mark of distinction in the Sabbath; for the streets are gaudily crowded, multitudes running to every public walk; buying and selling openly permitted, and no sort of traffic or amusement prohibited."

"Whereas in the North, the streets indeed are full, but it is with people all proceeding with cheerful piety, followed by their little families, to and from the house of God. Except in these hours, you see no concourse; and in the long summer evenings, instead of singing and dancing, you behold, at every cottage-door, a hoary-headed sire, with his venerable dame beside him, surrounded by his children and his children's children, reading to them the Holy Scriptures."

"Can we wonder at the temporary prosperity of the Scotch (so proverbially mentioned) when they thus obey the

commandments of their Creator, and hallow his sabbath-day? Or, at the dissoluteness of manners, which characterise those countries which so profane it? During the period of my own residence in Scotland, my devotion was considerably strengthened by the prevailing piety of the people."

The interior of Nôtre Dame, composed of long aisles, divided by heavy pillars, Deletia thought bore some resemblance to the English cathedrals; but the high altars, numberless confessionals, and walls covered with pictures, at once notified that she was not in a Protestant church. Yet Nôtre Dame exhibited an appearance at once solemn and imposing, in the service of military mass, which commenced at twelve o'clock. The church was thronged to pressure with people; and in the whole body of the sanctuary up to the altars, the soldiers, dressed in full uniforms, and bearing arms, were drawn up. The loud beating of

the deep-toned drums, as they reverberated through the church; the electric touch of the soldiers presenting arms, excited a sensation of awe, which rather inspired terror in the bosom of Deletia, than devotion, as she gazed on the sallow ferocious countenances of the French soldiers.

One form, previous to the commencement of mass, appeared very extraordinary. A young lady, in complete full dress, decorated with gay ornaments, and her hair elegantly arrayed with a chaplet of white roses, was preceded by an inferior priest and a *gendarme*, and with an open bag, or *aumôniere*, in her hand, gracefully presented it to every individual. This lady is called *la dame Quêteuse*, who, during divine service, is employed in asking charity for the poor. The one selected is always the daughter of a family of condition.

The service was very short; but Deletia observed, that the door of the

church was always open, and persons were perpetually entering and departing.

Victoire spent the remainder of the day with her parents, and in the evening joined the group of dancers on the green, in which rural sport she would fain have had Deletia partake; who, however, resisted even the wish, she would at least, look on.

From the activity of Maublanc, in procuring every necessary comfort for the house Lady Robina and Deletia were to occupy, they were able to take possession in the course of a few days. Her ladyship was pleased with the repose and beauty of the situation, and now first began to feel herself at home in France.

The neighbouring pavilions, containing respectable inhabitants, would have afforded them society, but the uncertainty of their stay, and wish for seclusion, made them decline, except in one English family, all new acquaintance,

who every day forced themselves upon them; and it was on Deletia's account Lady Robina was induced to associate with Captain and Mrs. Bertie and their two daughters. Her ladyship was too well-bred wholly to withstand their repeated inquiries after them; and they might be necessary to Miss Granville, whose spirits too often yielded to depression and despondence, to have some society. The Misses Bertie were about her own age, and good-humoured, unaffected girls.

It was natural that Victoire should devote much of her time to her parents. Lady Robina's delicate health kept her much at home, consequently Deletia found very agreeable companions in Anne and Fanny Bertie, in many delightful rambles, for the walks all around Havre were highly picturesque and beautiful.

The young ladies, however, prevailed on Lady Robina to make an excursion

with them for a day to Harfleur; a place Deletia was very desirous to see, from being so memorable in history.

The road between Havre and Harfleur might justly be called *un pays riant*, it was so fertile and lovely, finely diversified with hill and dale; every summit shaded with wood, and every house and cottage embowered in clusters of trees. The road, not as in England, divided from the meadows by hedge-rows, intersecting the pastures with stiff uniformity; but the luxuriant corn-fields are edged with double rows of apple-trees, bending down with blooming fruit; and the approach to all the towns sheltered by noble avenues of trees, which give an air of rural beauty, yet imposing grandeur to the most insignificant place.

The superb steeple of the church at Harfleur rose with majestic grace above the poor and ordinary buildings of this apparently insignificant town,

some time before they reached it. The conspicuous and important figure which this small place makes in the annals of history gives it a peculiar interest with the English stranger.*

* 1415.—First siege of Harfleur*, Henry V. lands at the Heights of Came the 13th August, and during the night of the 14th † takes possession of Port-au-Hoc, at the *embouchure* of the *Lezarde* into the *Seine*. His fleet consisted of 1600 vessels; the army of 30,000 men, exclusive of artillery-men and engineers. There were in the city 400 men at arms commanded by the captain (the Governor) d'Etonteville, and all the citizens took up arms; they made vigorous sorties against the besiegers, but the gunpowder and the arrows which the king, Charles VI. sent them, having been intercepted, and one part of the walls being thrown down by the batteries, they obtained a truce of three days, during which time Bagneville ‡ went to declare to the king the deplorable state to which the place was reduced. On the answer which this prince made him, that his army was not assembled, and that he had no succour to give, the town surrendered the 24th September. The nobles and the knights were sent to Calais, where they obtained their ransom. § The greatest part of the

* Monstrelet, vol. i. p. 218.

† Annales de F. Hottman, p. 352.

‡ Chronicle de Normandie.

§ Chartre de Charles VIII. Feb. 1492.

Lord Dorringcourt had read to Deletia Shakespeare's Henry the Fifth, and every line of that sublime poet was recalled to her memory in the impressive way in which Lord Dorringcourt gave it. She was now actually treading on the spot of that ever-memorable scene, where,

—— The warlike Harry, like himself,
Assumes the port of Mars, and at his heels sends
Famine, sword, and fire.

Who on the French ground play'd a tragedy,
Making defeat on the full power of France.

SHAKESPEARE.

Imagination instantly travelled back to that period of war and carnage, when the intrepid and aspiring Henry, having thrown off his youthful follies, was no

---

citizens obtained the same fate; 1600 families went out of the town, who, to punish them for their resistance, were despoiled of their possessions and inheritance. Henry the Vth declared, that those who remained (the poorest) could never acquire any house, nor hold any inheritance; and had burnt, upon the public square, all the charters, privileges, franchises, papers, and hereditary registers of these unhappy inhabitants.

longer viewed as the idle and wanton companion of the sensual and facetious Falstaff, but who shone so pre-eminently great in this field of victory and glory.

From the present impoverished and desolate aspect of Harfleur, it seemed never to have recovered the effects of that fatal period, but to have been marked out for nothing but successive sieges and depopulation. Little vestiges of the citadel remained, and the church alone stood a solitary monument of ancient grandeur.

This striking edifice is of the florid Gothic, richly ornamented with tracery work of the most beautiful design and finishing. The steeple rises to a degree of height most uncommon, but with such elegance and exact proportion, that the eye is held resting upon it with admiration.

The heavy pillars in the interior divide the body of the church into three

separate aisles, each terminated by a grand altar. Over the centre is a painting of the Crucifixion, with the Three Marys, which they remarked to be a painting in most of the Catholic churches. On the right side of the altar was placed a stone figure of Henry the Fourth of France, whom they had canonised; the companion was St. Martin.

When they departed from this hallowed sanctuary, and rambled over the town, peeping into two or three of the habitations of the poor, Lady Robina remarked to Mrs. Bertie, that there appeared to her a great analogy between the lower classes of the French and Scotch nations in the aspect of their habitations, dress, and modes of living.

"The French cottages," added her ladyship, "like the Highland huts, have no air of neatness nor comfort. Their bed, like the Scotch peasants, consists of a small crib in a recess in the wall. Their food is a matter of indif-

ference, and the exterior of their dwellings, unlike the rural beauty of England, have no pretty gardens before them ; no roses or woodbines clustering their lattice ; but a few bare stones and a dirty entrance."

"Oh! how different," added her ladyship, is this from the rural elegance, for such comparatively, I may call it, which adorns the humblest dwelling in Warwickshire."

Deletia had made similar remarks to herself.

As they were returning home, the curiosity of the party was strongly excited by the sound of mirthful singing, which, as a group of people approached, was so loud and boisterous, they were at a loss to comprehend the cause. The men and women were dressed in their best holiday suits, and passed by with such antick gestures and merry steps, more resembling a gambol than a walk, Lady Robina thought they must be

morrice-dancers, which species of diversion she had seen in the north of England; but on inquiry, these bigotted and superstitious people proved to be a party just returned from the funeral of a new-born infant belonging to one of the women, who lived just long enough to be baptized, and this was their mode of showing thankfulness and gratitude for having saved a soul alive.

Mr. and Mrs. Bertie spoke very feelingly, on the cruelty of not suffering Christian burial to the English who were not Catholics.

"If," said Mrs. Bertie, "your ladyship will come with me to a flower-garden, in our way home, I will show you where a poor friend of ours lies interred. To visit her was the occasion of our coming to Havre, and we found the summer here so delightful, we now propose remaining till the latter end of autumn."

Not far distant from d'Ingourville, they entered a large and beautiful flower-

garden, and walking between rows of rich and variegated pinks, in a remote corner of this gay parterre they beheld the little mouldering heaps of a few countrymen and women, not permitted to mingle their ashes in the sacred repositories of the dead. But though no "*storied urn, or animated bust,*" told to the passing stranger the history of their lives; yet over their graves waved many a simple flower, and

> "Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
> Returns to deck the hallow'd mould."

The closing visit of the day to this sequestered spot deeply affected Lady Robina Somerville, and the party withdrew in pensive silence.

CHAPTER XIV.

They had been about three weeks at d'Ingourville, when a packet of English letters proved most welcome to the banished Lady Robina and Deletia. They were each separately addressed by Lord Dorringcourt and Lady Elinor. Those to Deletia were as follow:

"To Miss Granville.

"The only consolation I taste, and which supports me, loveliest Miss Granville, under our painful and cruel separation, is the cheering prospect of a speedy termination to your cause, in the favourable decision that Lord Valville's claim will eventually be set aside."

"Oh! how insupportably long does the

time appear, until the blissful period arrives, when I shall be entitled to call you mine; and to show you, during every hour of my future existence, by the utmost tenderness and gratitude, that I am not unworthy the high honour conferred upon me, in selecting the favoured Dorringcourt, for the partner of your days."

"Oh, may no cares hereafter, my beloved Deletia, disturb the serenity of our lives, or obscure the bright sunshine of your mind. But as perfect felicity is not the lot of humanity, be assured, that you will possess at least, one warm and tender friend, who if he cannot lessen the inevitable ills of life, will try to sooth them by every kindness which the purest affection can bestow."

"Lord Valville is at present in London. Mr. Rutherford informs me, that he intends remaining there, until he is obliged finally to relinquish you."

"Be assured, sweetest Déletia, that I shall show no proud triumph, nor boast

of that happiness, which destroys the peace of that man, who, having once aspired to the hand of Miss Granville, must endure too serious a disappointment not to be commiserated and pitied.

"I find you are delighted with France, and the rural villa which you inhabit. Robina's sedentary habits and pensive turn of mind I am sure she will endeavour to overcome as much as possible, for the sake of her amiable companion; but when the tie of conjugal affection is severed by sudden death, the unhappy survivor, if possessed of the tenderness of my sister, cannot easily admit cheerfulness into a broken heart."

"France is a country abounding with so many objects of novelty and attraction, I shall be sorry if you do not exchange Havre, at least, for a short time, for some other place. If my sister has courage to go to Paris, I very much wish you to see that capital, however transiently. The buildings there are of

such elegance, magnitude, and splendour; the king's library so fine, the jardin des Plantes, the Louvre, and St. Germaine, are all so worthy your notice, as to afford not more a source of wonder than admiration and delight."

"The splendour also of the court is dazzling. Robina has been presented, therefore no difficulty would attend your introduction."

"Adieu, charming and beloved Miss Granville."

"DORRINGCOURT.

"Oakley Park,
July 15th, 17—."

Deletia having read Lord Dorringcourt's letter with tender emotion, next perused his sister's.

"To Miss Granville.

"I hope, dearest Deletia, the gay country which you now inhabit, has inspired you with a portion of the native

vivacity of its people, and that you do not droop and mourn for Old England.

"My brother and I make a very dull *tête-à-tête* couple. Since he has avowed his preference for you, I am left no scope for my raillery, which is now so entirely changed into sympathetic kindness, if you and Robina do not soon return, I am afraid I shall dwindle into one of your tender sentimental females, a most insipid sort of being.

"I would bid you, Deletia, write me a history of your adventures; but since you have taken leave of the old abbey, and discarded Lord Valville, the romantic part of your life is over, whilst mine is not yet commenced; for Cupid has not yet thought fit to knock at my door, and even if he were, he would not easily find admittance. At present, I have a thousand pretty innocent creatures to love me, in the tribe of birds and animals, who daily hover around me, and they return my caresses with such winning

ways, . I do think them very sensible creatures."

"Robina's children have superseded them surprisingly in my affection. They are beautiful and attracting little loves, and with their pretty innocent infantile prattle, beguile me from my books and harpsichord.

"I suppose Victoire sings and dances all day long.

"We languish for your return. Oakley Park does not look half so lovely since you and my sister left me to enjoy its refreshing shades alone."

"ELINOR ARDEN."

"My brother," said Lady Robina, as she closed his epistle to her, "seems anxious that you should go to Paris. I would certainly, dear Miss Granville, attend you if I had health to accompany you to all the spectacles to which a stranger naturally wishes to be admitted; but I am afraid, under the drawback

which I should give to enjoyment, I should qnly prove a restraint."

"The Berties," continued her ladyship, "as you know, propose going to Paris next week merely for a month, and have been perpetually teazing me to accompany them; or if I would not, suffer you; and truly I think you could not be under better escort than with them. They are kindly-intentioned people, and the young ladies are favourites of yours. Fanny is so lively and entertaining, her observations would prove a constant source of amusement."

"Don't however imagine, Deletia," added Lady Robina, "I wish to turn you over to these good people, without your entire inclination and consent. I have wholly devoted myself to you, and I am at your command; but the diversions of Paris I cannot reconcile, either to my taste or habits of life, to partake of, at so early a period after the loss of my beloved Somerville, for scarcely a

year has he yet been numbered with the dead. In truth, it is only a life of privacy and seclusion that renders existence tolerable. I perceive Dorringcourt, like most men who have travelled, thinks that English manners require an association with foreign courts to give that polished finish not to be acquired at home."

The idea of leaving Lady Robina alone at d'Ingourville to visit Paris, was so dissonant to Deletia's feelings, she would not hear for some time of making the excursion. But her ladyship pressed the point so closely, and with such serious earnestness, she at length found the only way to prevent Lady Robina from doing violence to her inclination, was to join the Berties during the space of the little month they intended being absent. Victoire in the mean while promised to remain at d'Ingourville.

CHAPTER XV.

Every thing was arranged with the Bertie family for Deletia's accompanying them to Paris by Lady Robina Somerville, when she finally consented to join their party.

The first day's journey brought the travellers to Rouen, passing in their way thither through endless avenues of apple-trees, intersected with rich corn-fields, ancient châteaus, and gloomy convents.

They passed a day at Rouen, to look at the cathedral built by William the Conqueror, superb and unparalleled in the beauty of its decorations. But the more graceful structure of St. Ouen surpassed the cathedral in the stained glass of such magnitude, in the high arched

windows and rich diversity of colour, which, as Captain Bertie informed Deletia, rendered by comparison, that in York Minster, quite insignificant.

Nothing could be more ugly than the town itself, but from the grandeur of the approach between a double row of noble and stately elm trees, with the Seine broader than the Thames flowing at the edge, and navigable from Havre, with innumerable ships and barges, promised a place of considerable attraction from the air of importance attached to the exterior, as the traveller proceeds along a very broad road canopied with the embowering shade of the noble *boulevard*, to the extent of above a mile. The combination of landscape was magnificent, yet highly romantic and picturesque, presenting Rouen in the plain with its antique houses, and the lofty towers of the cathedral and St. Owen bordering the Seine, which, meandering through the valley, is crowned with small

islands, and bounded by the blue hills of Lower Normandy, while the striking and prominent one of St. Catherine hangs perpendicularly over the plain.

But how cruelly is expectation disappointed in proceeding through the principal streets, so very narrow the carriage filled the whole space, and the high dark gloomy aspect of the houses, the dirty appearance of the place, with the close, fœtid air, gave no hope of any thing very inviting. Rouen seems far to exceed Havre in population and traffic, for the market places were well stocked with vast variety, the shops, though ill assorted, filled with a rare and choice assortment of articles, and the streets thronged to pressure with people. The dress of the inhabitants partook of the same character as that of the people at Havre, but was neither so delicately nice nor picturesque. Nor did the young women look half so *debonnaire.*

They were persecuted with beggars of

the most impoverished and wretched description, who thronged round them in every corner of the streets, and even many of them stationary at the church doors.

They were much pleased with the singular and ingenious construction of the bridge of boats, the invention of an Augustine friar, composed of timber formed in squares which contain the stones, and is a thousand feet in length. This fabric rests upon nineteen large barges which rise and fall with the flowing and retreating of the tide.

Deletia when they visited the *Place aux Vaux*, looked with an eye of compassionate pity on the noble stone figure of Joan d'Arc the Maid of Orleans, which stands in the centre of the square, a marked instance of the weak superstition of those barbarous times, when her meritorious conquests were regarded as something supernatural, and she fell a victim to the bigotry of a people who

rewarded her intrepid heroism at the stake, where she suffered with all that self-possession which she displayed when she led her armies forth to battle.

The afternoon of the second day brought them to the entrance of Paris, by the grand barrier of St. Denis, and shortly after, they were in the capital of France.

CHAPTER XVI.

Deletia could not have visited Paris with people who were more disposed to enter into all the amusements which it afforded, or who had more taste to view every place worth inspecting than the Berties.

They were well accomodated in one of the most central parts of the city for the opera, the theatres, the Champs Elysées, the Tuilleries, the Louvre, and all places of attractive and constant resort.

The novelty and grandeur of every thing Deletia beheld, the buildings, the streets, the Parisians, possessing in some respects such superiority over England, she still, on a comparison, thought could not vie with London in the *tout ensemble*, to which on the whole, she gave the pre-

ference, though she was sufficiently candid to admit, in the magnificence and magnitude of their palaces and churches, with the exception of Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's, the meanest in France boasted a proud superiority over those of the most striking grandeur in England.

The homely attire of the Parisians at the theatre, the dulness of the decoration, the gloom of their aspect from the absence of illumination, gave a sombre appearance to the place and people. The performance was all declamation, the actors all unnatural getures. Paris could boast of no Garrick, no Quin; and though at the opera, the dancers seemed to be beings rather of an ethereal than a terrestrial sphere, they moved with such elasticity and grace, yet their motions appeared so distorted and preternatural, she could not altogether admire it.

Deletia found the description which her mother had given Lady Dorringcourt

of Versailles, St. Cloud, the Tuilleries and Luxemburgh, just such as she had described them, and she viewed all these particular spots with additional interest.

The Berties were acquainted with several agreeable families both French and English in Paris, and though they were not of the very highest of the court society, yet there were some of the *noblesse* in the number.

Deletia had never seen in England, the style of meeting in Paris, which is denominated a *soirée.* It is simply opening your doors on stated evenings to your acquaintance, who are at liberty to come without the ceremony of a formal invitation for two or three hours, which period is passed either at cards or in conversation. No refreshments are presented at these *soirées*, and it is only at a *petit fête* or *balle*, that coffee, ice, and lemonade are presented. The origin of these *soirees* in Paris, sprung from the poverty of the people, who were unable

to entertain, but having that spirit for sociability, they saw no reason wholly to relinquish society because they did not find it convenient to feed the appetites of their guests.

Deletia and the Miss Berties were much delighted with these *soirées*, as they afforded them the opportunity of mixing with the Parisian ladies, and seeing a vast diversity of persons and characters.

Two or three days after their arrival in Paris, Captain Bertie chanced to meet his old acquaintance Colonel Maynard, with whom he was on terms of great intimacy and friendship. He was immediately invited to their house, and always made one in their parties; indeed, it soon appeared that he was a favoured lover of Miss Fanny Bertie's. He instantly recognised Miss Granville, to whom he at once made himself known, by the repetition of the scene at Ranelagh, which had proved such a source of misery to her in dividing her from Lord Dorringcourt;

but she was not the least aware that he was an acquaintance of Lord Valyille's; of him he had never spoken.

There is always a rural *fête* held the second Sunday in July, in the woods of Montmorency, to which *fête* Colonel Maynard expressed so much anxiety for the Berties to go, they consented, the weather proving extremely favourable for an excursion of the sort.

Almost a month spent in Paris, had not, however, reconciled Deletia to the mode in which Sunday was past, a perpetual day of traffic in the early part, and of sport and rural pastime in the evenings. The Berties positively would not go to Montmorency without her, and she was obliged to make one of their party.

The distance was ten miles from Paris, through a country too flat and uniform to have any claim to beauty. It showed, indeed, an abundant harvest, and some

luxuriant vineyards, but nothing either grand or picturesque.

No spot could be more happily adapted for rural sports than these woods of Montmorency, opening in various parts into sequestered glades where parties withdrew to their chosen pastimes. Every rural sport that imagination could suggest or fancy devise, was going forward to the amusement of those who were mere spectators; and beheld the different groups mingled under the shade of those trees, where they were distinctly seen through the partial openings, making a very picturesque and fantastic appearance.

Not far from where the Berties spread their repast, a party were regaling under the spreading branches of large chesnut trees, many boughs of which were hung with the gay hats of the grisettes.

The violin, the tabor, pipe, and flute, at intervals floated on the air in pastoral melody, to the graceful steps of the dan-

cers, who formed themselves in whimsical groups, and were gayly tripping it along on the " light fantastic toe," with mirthful glee; the young men and women drest in such a pretty pastoral style, as gave an Arcadian appearance to the scene. When the dance was ended, they seated themselves on the cool grass, when some of the young girls sung in melodious strains, some of the provincial airs of the country.

The eyes of the party were next directed to another part of the woods, where mirth and laughter was heard, and childish sports were going on. In this motley throng were the most whimsical description of persons talking in all degrees. The young, the old, the lame, the blind, the rich, the poor, for they were of every sort, character, and occupation.

Booths were spread beneath the trees, containing every kind of thing the purchaser could possibly fancy, and in the space of ground which opened into a

sort of plain, the merry dance went on with spirit, in which the towering plume of many a soldier was seen, as they chased the pretty grisettes.

Deletia remarked, that in France, persons were dressed according to their degrees in life; and *station* could not be sometimes mistaken, as in England, and all those who moved in an ordinary sphere, had a habit peculiar to themselves, which she thought made a very proper distinction in the degrees of society.

Punch, pantaloons, fortune-tellers, mountebanks, puppet-shows, all went on with vivacity; and though Deletia felt much disturbed when she reverted to the sacred day, yet she was sensible the religion of the country rendered these sports admissible, and she could not but admire the perfect decorum which was preserved. The multitudinous throng were all gay, happy, and buoyant with mirth, but not boisterous. The men

were all perfectly sober, and there was no jostling or brutal vulgarity to be seen in a crowd of several hundred persons.

An itinerant boy who carried ballads in his hand, diverted them exceedingly. He sung with a degree of original humour, giving to every part of his *chanson*, which was a sort of ridiculous history, the most ludicrous effect. From the aptness of his gestures, the quick and sly expression of his eyes, which were dark, lively, and brilliant, you might have fancied, that he was taking a part in a comedy; so well did he go through the performance.

A pretty little girl also extremely diverted and delighted Deletia. She carried about a variety of *dragées*, with which she was so heavily laden, her baby arms had scarcely strength to support the sort of tray on which they were spread.

She offered her things in the most coaxing and persuasive tone. When

repulsed, she went away for a minute, but returned again and again, and described the goodness of each *bon, bon*, with such facility, and teasing intreaty, there was no resisting her, and the party divided the contents of her tray amongst them. She was a most attractive little creature, and drest for a child, in a most fantastic and singular manner.

They did not quit the gay scene until the lamps were seen sparkling amongst the trees, and the sound of the mirthful music, followed them on the air to some distance.

CHAPTER XVII.

The day was now fixed for the Berties leaving Paris. Deletia was delighted with the prospect of returning to Lady Robina Somerville, whom she had often thought of with anxious solicitude, for she felt distressed in having left her alone in a strange kingdom, and became very impatient to be again with her at d'Ingourville.

The last evening of their sojourn in Paris, Mrs. Bertie and her daughters made an engagement for the opera, to which Deletia declined accompanying them, being much indisposed with the head-ach, and preferred repose and solitude before the commencement of their journey. They were averse to leave

Deletia at home, but politeness forbade Mrs. Bertie's pressing the subject, when she saw that it did not prove agreeable.

The party were not long departed, when the room door was suddenly thrown open, and a person unannounced rushed in, whom, notwithstanding the obscurity of the lamp, Deletia knew to be Valville.

She gave an exclamation of terror and surprise, and would instantly have fled into the room ajoining, and closed the door upon him, but he caught hold of her robe, and forcibly detained her.

"At length," said he, vehemently, "I have found you, after fruitless and unwearied pursuit. You are my wife," added he, with ardour, as he seized her hand, "my wife by your own free consent, and, as such, I now and henceforth claim you. It is in vain, Miss Granville, that you would withdraw that hand betrothed to me, to confer it on Lord Dorringcourt. I am aware of the favoured

preference which he possesses over me; but even that will not avail him; for, as surely as you afford him the smallest hope of encouragement, that moment shall one of us answer your decision with our existence."

Deletia, though appalled by Valville's sudden appearance, was not to be intimidated with his threats; and a preternatural strength of mind seemed to be given her.

"When, my lord," said she, with calm dignity, I consented to be yours, the device practised by Lady Valville to draw me into a marriage, to which you knew me always averse, must now cancel every obligation to render it binding. To yield to your pretended claims, after a ceremony so interrupted, is impossible. Let me then rest in peace; for I solemnly declare, that neither intreaty nor compulsion shall ever prevail on me to enter with you a second time into so sacred an engagement."

"You have, sir," continued she, "driven me, by your desperate conduct, from place to place; from my natural and paternal home; from my paternal inheritance; thrown me, in the first instance, on the benevolence of strangers; and, not satisfied with your continued persecution, would now, by coercive measures, try to persuade me that I am legally your wife."

"And would you pretend, Miss Granville, to dispute it?" interrupted Valville, with eager impatience. "You may as well attempt to stopt the sun in his course, as to attempt to persuade me to relinquish you. But that you may not find me that monster of cruelty, that tyrannical husband, I perceive your fancy has pictured, to show you that my aim is only to place you beyond the reach of Dorringcourt, and to bring you to a sense of that justice which is due to a man, who, by every law human and divine, is your husband, I shall, for the

present, merely place you under the protection of the abbé's sister, who is *superieure* in the convent of——— situated at some distance from Paris.

"I have stated my case," added he, "with truth and simplicity to the minister of the police, that you have broke your vows, violated the faith you plighted to me, in bestowing yourself on another when you were mine; secretly absconding from your husband to place yourself under the protection of a favoured lover. You are now put in the care of the mother-church; you have been brought up as one of its members, however you may pretend to reject its creed."

"Through colonel Maynard's vigilance," pursued Valville, "I traced you to Paris, to your present abode; and I shall myself conduct you to the asylum I have chosen, for a short period, for your residence, that you may there have opportunity for reflection and that sea-

sonable advice which, I trust, will teach you submission to your destiny with cheerful compliance, until I shall come to reclaim you. My carriage waits to conduct you hence."

Deletia firmly protested that she would not depart from where she was; and withdrew with indignation the hand Valville had taken.

"There is no Lord Dorringcourt," cried he, "with a malicious smile, now at hand to call in to your aid; you are, Deletia, wholly in my power. Resist that power, and tremble, for the consequence, for as surely as you resist, fatal shall prove the issue to Dorringcourt."

"I will give you," he continued, "an hour to collect those necessaries you may wish to take along with you. But while you are so engaged, I shall keep centinel myself at your door; I have paid too dearly for my former incaution, to again trust you from me."

Valville withstood with firmness the

tears and intreaties of Deletia, but she still resisted his threats, till, out of all patience, he said in a resolute tone, "you compel me to violent measures by your obstinacy. I would fain have spared you the distress which you are creating to yourself, by the unseasonable presence of a stranger, but as you are not to be won by gentleness, I shall now desire the abbé to put his authority in action."

Valville rung the bell, and desired the gentleman who was waiting in the carriage might be told to alight.

An elderly man of a majestic and stern appearance entered the room.

His countenance was wan and sallow, his eyes dark and piercing, with an expression that seemed to penetrate into the recesses of the soul. His brow marked decision of character, and his whole air tended to inspire awe rather than consolation.

When Deletia beheld the abbé, she was disarmed of all her courage.

He addressed her in a tone of authority,

and rebuked her as a great sinner, in having, he understood, absconded from her husband, to indulge an illicit passion for another. He informed her, that Lord Valville had placed her under the special care of the church, of which she had proved a rebellious member, but that a proper sanctuary was provided for her, where leisure would be given for self-examination, for she was to be admitted a boarder into the convent of —— until she either wholly renounced the world, or returned to her husband. There was no choice left her except one of these alternatives.

The abbé took Deletia by the arm, and having carried her by force down stairs, he put her into the carriage which was waiting in the court, and seated her between Valville and himself.

Deletia who had fainted, when in some degree restored to herself by the rolling of the carriage over the rough stones of Paris, now fixed her eyes on the window

to endeavour to discover whither they were going, but the streets were so partially lighted, and the lamps suspended at such a considerable distance from each other, she was quite at a loss to find out the route they were taking; passing through one long narrow and intricate street, after another till they approached the barrier, which she now discovered to be at the very opposite point from the one by which she had entered Paris.

At the first post for changing horses, Valville alighted and brought some wine, cake, and fruit to the carriage door, which he presented to Deletia and requested her to partake of, but she positively declined all refreshment, and would scarcely give him a reply, so great were her feelings of indignation and displeasure. Though conscious she was wholly in his power, even that painful certainty did not soften her resentment for such iniquitous conduct, and the very feeling of resentment which he had inspired in

her bosom, was the feeling which supported her under her present calamitous situation.

The insidious abbé now endeavoured to sooth and cheer Deletia, but she turned from him with sensations of disgust and abhorrence, and viewed him but as a machine by which Valville was enabled to carry on his diabolical plot finally to entrap her.

The priest, on perceiving her horror, said, "you have no occasion for this tremor, we are only going to escort you to a most safe and honourable retreat, a shelter alike for innocence and penitence, where the mind which has lost the one may be restored to the other. It is a sanctuary with every advantage which reason would desire or piety prefer. Time will effect much on so young a wanderer, you will be treated with equal tenderness and respect, for you are of our fold."

CHAPTER XVIII.

When the sun began to streak with his morning beams the eastern hemisphere, Deletia watched every turning of the road, to try to discover whether she had ever travelled over it before; but she recognized not a single post, or one known object, during a journey of fifty miles.

Within the last ten, she fancied she now discerned some features in the distant landscape not altogether unknown; and as they proceeded, the meandering Seine, with its poplar crowned islets, winding at the foot of St. Catherine, with the high towers of the cathedral and St. Owen, discovered to her they were fast approaching Rouen; but whether it was to prove the place of her imprisonment, she could

not conjecture, for not a word on the subject had escaped either the abbé or Valville.

It was mid-day when they entered the town. Driving up a steep ascent they came to the great gates of——, which were opened by a lay-sister. The antiquity of the building, the enormous height of the walls, and the gloomy aspect of the exterior, struck a chill to the heart of Deletia, as she surveyed with tearful eyes, this sepulchral prison.—On entering the ponderous gates, which immediately closed upon them, the heavy edifice possessed a less dismal appearance than Deletia had foreboded. The building spread round a large square court, terminated at the base by solemn cloisters; but the profusion of flowers and exotics placed on stands, decorating the grand entry, devested the place of that melancholy aspect which usually belongs to monastic abodes.

Valville and the abbé conducted Dele-

tia into the convent parlour, who, considering it as a respite from persecution for the present, summoned all her fortitude to conceal her agitation. But when on Valville presenting her to the *superieure*, under whose entire protection and controul he committed her for a short period *as his wife*, unable longer to combat with her emotions, she fainted, and Valville and the priest left her.

It was some time before she was restored to sensation; when, on opening her eyes, she perceived herself in the arms of the abbess, who was administering cordials in the tenderest manner.

The countenance of the *superieure* was one of those which inspire confidence; composed and beaming with benevolence—age had marked its honours without its cares on her serene and lofty brow; and she addressed Deletia with a voice and words calculated to chace away terror and mistrust.

"Welcome, my afflicted child, to an

asylum of peace; to a refuge from the miseries of life, and, above all, a harbour from the storms of passion and of strife."

"You will meet with only spirits here of kindness and of sympathy; and it shall be your abode, as long as you can be happy with us, while every attention which can lighten sorrow and dissipate painful recollection, shall sedulously be paid you by every member of our favoured community."

Deletia, as much astonished as consoled by this address, could only press her hand, and look her gratitude; but shortly exclaimed, "Oh madame! be not deceived—I am not the wife of Valville."

"Whatever you are, my lovely child, you shall be protected by me—and as you are intrusted to my care by Providence, believe me that it is for your temporal and eternal welfare."

"Oh! do not give me up again to

Valville," she replied with agony. "I am not his wife — sooner let me die within these walls! You look benignant and good, — dearest madam, shield me from Valville, till my friends know of his having me in his power, and they will richly reward, and ever bless you!"

"Be calm, my poor afflicted daughter," the abbess replied, concerned. "You shall remain with me unmolested by any one you dread. Only confide in me, rely upon a friendship founded on religious principles, and which never can betray an unhappy one who takes shelter under these hallowed walls. The priest who conducted you hither, (the brother to the *superieure*,) is a good man."

Deletia could not but observe the hand of Providence which directed Valville to place her under the auspices of the worthy. Yet she thought it might be all a pre-concerted plan to betray her: but then, one look at the countenance and air of the abbess, announcing truth

and honour, checked the rising suspicion, and a gleam of hope irradiated her desponding mind.

"You will find us, my daughter," added she, "all cheerful and happy. We are a family of love. The sisters will regard you with affection; and when the hours of humiliation and prayer are ended, you will be permitted to mix with the sisters, who then indulge themselves in devout conversation, while they are employed in their ingenious works, which they will be pleased to teach you. I will show you what delightful gardens belong to the convent, where, removed from the pomps, the vanities, the allurements of the world, you will have leisure for sublime contemplation."

Ah! thought Deletia, sufficient leisure will indeed be afforded for the most painful and mournful retrospection, for she well knew, from all that she had seen of the Catholic persuasion, the manners and

conversation of the nuns would be not only the most insidious .but the most impossing, tending to ensnare those who possessed not foresight to discern their aim and to obtain proselytes, by their specious address and seducing conversation.

Deletia had now no possible means of escaping from a situation decidedly wretched. She was imprisoned in little better than a living tomb, separated from every friend who could aid or protect her. She was deprived the use of pen and ink, and was finally consigned to the care and authority of the abbess, whose complacent manners might be all deception, though, if she might judge her character by the expression of her countenance, they denoted purity of heart, and a sympathetic feeling for the unhappy, whose afflictions she wished, if possible, to lighten.

The abbé, with formal solemnity, consigned Deletia. to the care of his sister,

and after a serious admonition to Miss Granville, he took leave.

When Deletia saw the great gates of the convent finally close upon her, and she found herself actually shut out from the world, to make one in this living sepulchre, for in no other light did she view this melancholy abode, she flung herself into a chair, in an agony of grief which was too violent to find relief in tears.

"This impassioned emotion, daughter," said the *superieure*, at the same time trying to sooth her, "is unbecoming that Christian meekness which ought particularly to shine forth with resignation and humility in the hour of trial and affliction. But when you are more composed, you shall unbosom yourself to me, and if kindness can lighten your grief, that will not be wanting."

The abbess conducted Deletia into the chapel. Before she entered, she put up

her finger to her lips to impose silence, and trod on tip-toe when they approached the holy place. It was decorated in a pompous style, and hung with some very fine paintings, a dying Saviour always being the prominent figure in the piece. The gaudy ornaments on the high altar in all the Catholic churches and chapels, though Deletia's eye had long been accustomed to them, were not the less displeasing to her, giving an impression of impious ostentation in such extraneous ceremonials.

A few nuns were prostrated in acts of devotion in the chapel, who instantly, on their entering, enveloped themselves in their long veils, and turned aside.

On withdrawing from the chapel, the abbess said to Deletia, in a low whisper, "We shall have vespers at six o'clock. You will, daughter, find consolation in pouring out your soul at that time in religious devotion."

She next showed her the refectory,

the floor of which was paved with stone, and tables were spread between the long arcades, which ran from one end to the other of the refectory. The white-washed walls were covered with the pictures of saints, some of them men and women who had been canonized, and of the former abbesses belonging to the order of Ursulines.

Deletia was next conducted up a spacious stone stair-case, also richly adorned with pictures on the walls. Ushering her through folding mahogany doors into a very long gallery, the abbess here again put her finger on her lips, and Deletia beheld, written in large gold letters over each entrance to the gallery, the word *silence*! Also in the centre side of the gallery was painted an eye surrounded with rays, bearing the motto *Dieu te voit.*

Along each side of the gallery, extended in close uniformity, the doors which led into the cells of each of the nuns, whose name was written above.

"These cells," said the *superieure*, as she entered to show them to Deletia, "you will find contain every necessary for the sisters; but no supernumeraries. Indeed, Deletia was surprised and pleased, to observe the cells were not half so comfortless and forlorn as she expected. The pallet on which the nuns reposed, was furnished with proper covering, and the cell supplied with a chest of drawers and table.

On leaving the gallery, Deletia was next shown into a large cheerful room, the windows of which presented a view of the beautiful and spacious gardens where the lady borders were assembled; but she experienced the utmost disappointment and sorrow, when informed she was to have no intercourse with any of those ladies.

A cell, such as she had seen, was appropriated to her, and when she was not there, she was to sit in the convent parlour, where the nuns assembled at stated hours. She remarked the follow-

ing motto above the grate of the parlour she had been first ushered into in large letters: *Si tu veux connaître la valeur d'un moment, interroge le mourant, sur son lit de la mort.*

Deletia found it was in vain, either to repine or to express the smallest disapprobation in the arrangements made for her. The only chance there appeared of altering her cruel destiny, was to endeavour to win the esteem of the abbess, or perhaps, when opportunity offered, the interest of some of the nuns, in whom she could place confidence.

The abbess saw, from the paleness and languor of Deletia's countenance, that she was ill and fatigued, and had some refreshment set before her, which she insisted on her taking; and then retiring to rest, until the bell summoned them to vespers.

Deletia endeavoured to swallow a little food and wine, for she had not tasted any thing since the former day. She afterwards was conducted by a lay-sister

to her pallet, on which she threw herself in sorrow and despair; and soon experienced, in temporary forgetfulness, a few hours repose.

The sound of the bell, and the step of the nuns passing along the gallery, roused her too soon to a sense of her wretchedness; she sprung up, and opening the door of her cell, was shown by a young, and interesting nun, sister Paulina, into the chapel, where, in meek humiliation and poignant grief, she prayed for fortitude and resignation to support her present sorrow.

CHAPTER XIX.

When the Berties returned from the opera, great was their dismay and affright, to find Miss Granville gone; no one knew whither. They heard the almost incredible account of her having been carried away by force from the hotel, during their short absence, by two gentlemen, whom the captain's men had never before seen. Annette, the *fille de chambre*, added, the young seigneur had insisted on being admitted to mademoiselle, and soon after he took her away with another person, who was waiting for him at the gate in a carriage.

Colonel Maynard, who accompanied them home, when he heard the detail,

wore such a look of surprise and consternation, Mrs. Bertie, exclaimed, "I hope Colonel, you have not been accessory to what has happened? Miss Granville was under our protection, and how am I to be responsible to Lady Robina Somerville, for so extraordinary an omission of care, in losing sight, for even a few hours, of a young creature, who is perfectly idolized by Lady Robina's family?"

"Faith," cried the Colonel, "it is an unlucky business, for I must confess myself somewhat the aggressor; yet I knew not how I could have acted otherwise than I have done, since Valville related to me the particulars of his engagement with Miss Granville, which was singularly broken off, and ever since that period, he has been pursuing her. Upon my soul, I pitied his disappointment, and thought him an ill-used man. He had no idea of Miss Granville being on the continent; and made himself

certain, she had accompanied Lady Robina Somerville to Scotland, in which country her ladyship made a matrimonial alliance, and where the property of her late husband lies."

"Valville knew that Miss Granville had left Oakley, where Lord Dorringcourt quietly remained with his other sister; and at this time, Valville has messengers dispatched to various parts of Scotland, to try to trace Miss Granville."

"Had I known, or could even have guessed," continued the Colonel, "that she was in confidence entrusted to your immediate care, you may be assured, with the prospect of becoming so soon a member of your family, I would not have betrayed the trust. But you never named to me any circumstance connected with Miss Granville's extraordinary history, you spoke of no confidence reposed; therefore it was not unnatural for me, to relate to Valville, with whom I always correspond, that Miss Gran-

ville was now an inmate with those friends of mine, to whose daughter I was shortly to be united."

"Whither Valville is gone I know not, nor is it possible to conjecture. Of course, on his arrival in Paris, he immediately drove to this hotel; his having done so, unhappily tells what followed. If it will afford any relief to your anxiety my trying to discover Miss Granville's destination, I will lose no time in setting out. In France there does not exist that difficulty in tracing people that there is in England."

The Berties availed themselves of the Colonel's obliging offer, and the next morning he was to set out on his pursuit, whilst they travelled towards Havre.

The Berties had not courage to write and inform Lady Robina Somerville of the sad tidings which they had to communicate, nor the distress which the event of Deletia's removal from them had occasioned. It prayed upon Mrs.

Bertie's nerves and spirits to so violent a degree, she was scarcely able to undertake the journey to Normandy.

Captain Bertie, on their return home, was the person employed to communicate to Lady Robina, the unfortunate event which had happened, which he did with as much caution as possible. Though it appeared, from the candour and truth with which he gave the narrative, none of his family were to blame, as Deletia was left at home by her own desire, yet her ladyship received the information of so afflictive an occurrence, and likely to prove so fatal in its consequence to her brother's happiness, with the most poignant sorrow. Not only for his sake was she plunged into affliction, but for that also of her amiable young friend, who, in again being in Valville's power, she believed now to be irrecoverably lost to them, and herself sunk into the abyss of despair and misery.

The distress attached to this unhappy affair was considerably augmented by the perfect ignorance in which she must inevitably remain of what was become of Deletia, and what cruelties Valville might exercise; for Lady Robina, from what she had heard of him, and knew of the character of his mother, believed him capable of making her either a prisoner for life, or even putting her into the inquisition.

The most painful difficulty arose in Lady Robina's bosom how to act with respect to her own proceedings. She determined, after a variety of plans, to remain at Havre for the present, and request her brother to join her there. In the meantime, she prevailed on the excellent Maublanc to set out for Paris with all speed, and by going to the hotel where the Berties put up, endeavour from the *maître* to trace Miss Granville. Her ladyship was somewhat consoled in hearing from Mau-

blanc, that such was the regulation of the police in Paris for obtaining intimation of the different strangers, he did not entertain a doubt of discovering her.

Madame Maublanc and Victoire during his absence took up their abode with Lady Robina at d'Ingourville.

Her ladyship having subdued, in some degree, her agitated spirits, wrote to Lord Dorringcourt as follows:

"My dear Brother,

"I request that you will join me at Havre without delay. I grieve to alarm or give you a moment's apprehension for the safety of our lovely young friend, but I have every reason to be assured that Lord Valville is now on the continent and has discovered Miss Granville's abode, therefore you must perceive the necessity and importance of setting out immediately.

"I shall add no more at present on this disastrous subject.

"Your's affectionately,

"ROBINA SOMERVILLE.

"Havre de Grace,
August 12, 17."

Internally wretched as Deletia felt, and weighed down in spirits by the heavy affliction with which she was visited, she yet found in the calm uniformity of a monastic life her mind insensibly soothed by the pious and cheerful demeanour and persuasive address of the nuns. Nor was she ungrateful for the indulgences which the abbess permitted her in walking and sitting in the garden of the convent. Often she cast her eyes on the tower which stands in the garden in which Joan of Arc was confined previous to her execution, and she found she was venerated in the convent as a saint and martyr, and she bestowed a sigh to the memory of that intrepid woman.

Deletia was allowed the companionship of Paulina when she was not engaged in her religious exercises; for she had herself been the daughter of affliction and disappointment, and there was a dignified sadness in her deportment which excited in the bosom of Deletia a sentiment of respect and regard.

The *superieure* had more than once seen Valville when he appeared at the grate, to which he obtained admittance, through the influence of the abbé, her brother, but there was an air of such imperious authority in his manner and conversation, such superciliousness and self-confidence, though he put on a courteous and condescending address, and made use of the highest strain of flattery, the abbess took a decided dislike to him, and became so much prejudiced in his disfavour, she conscientiously thought that her daughter Deletia so well merited a better fate, that her tenderest sympathy was excited in her welfare. She considered

she was only fulfilling the important duties with which she was invested, by trying to wean Deletia's affections from this world, that she might place them on more sublime and important objects.

Only once had Valville seen Deletia since he had placed her in the convent, a step he began to fear he had been rash and imprudent in taking; for he remarked that instead of Deletia's relaxing in his favour, in consequence of her present confinement, she was more steady and persevering in declining to listen to him; and he became resolved, if in a short time her opinion did not alter, to assume his right, determined that death alone should finally separate them.

The abbess took an early opportunity of conversing with Deletia, and with the greatest delicacy, made inquiries concerning the grounds of Valville's assertion, "*that she was his wife.*"

Deletia told her, without naming Lady

Valville, that it had been a forced marriage, interrupted before the ceremony was concluded; and though she had been harassed into compliance, so far as to sign the contract and to go into the church; a most singular and terrific circumstance impeded the marriage service, by Valville's cruel mother (who had been the author of all her calamities) falling into the vault which was under the altar, (a stone giving way), and this vault containing the ashes of her own beloved parents had such an effect, that Lady Valville herself forbid the ceremony to go on; — by which means she was rescued, and had been placed under the protection of her deceased mother's dearest friend — there Lord Dorringcourt — every way calculated to make her happy, made his addresses, and to whom she had betrothed herself, but till she became of age could not espouse, as the opinion of the law was essential to pre-

vent the claims of Valville, who, having traced her to France, had forcibly conducted her to this convent."

The manner in which she made this relation, left no doubt of its sincerity on the mind of the benevolent abbess, who assured her that when the good priest was acquainted with all these particulars, he would unite his efforts with her own, to withstand any arts to remove her from the convent. — But she wished to know whether she was a protestant, or belonging to the Romish Church, as in that case it would be more difficult to act in opposition to a nominal husband — especially as she had no parents to claim her.

Deletia acquainted the *superieure* that she had been baptized in the Protestant Church, never been formally received into any other; for though she attended mass in the chapel of the lady with whom she lived, her parents had been

Protestants; and her father, in his will, ordered that she should be educated in this persuasion.

Here the amiable abbess sighed.— "Had you, my beloved child," she said, "belonged to us, you might have effectually been disengaged from Valville, by taking the veil; — though if your heart is attached to another, and your happiness seems dependent on this attachment, far be it from me to wish a half-sacrifice, where all should be choice; — but indeed the choice ensures peace and tranquillity! However, the priest must be informed that you are not under his jurisdiction. — He never would have interfered, had he not been deceived, or joined with Valville to take a *protestant* young lady from her friends by force, and fix her in a convent."

Here Deletia expressed her warmest acknowledgments and satisfaction, at being under such a kind protectress, and

entreated her to believe that she could not, under her present circumstances have been so happy or so safe in any other asylum. — Her, eyes suffused in tears, attested the assurance sprang from her heart.

CHAPTER XX.

The young Paulina had so little of the pensive and demure in her composition, though she was steady, collected, and devout, so prone was her disposition to the sprightly sallies of youth, she beguiled Deletia at intervals of her grief, by the little histories which she gave her of the sisters, and the sketches of their various characters.

"There is one of the nuns," said Deletia, "I have remarked only within these last few days, who, from her air, has engaged my exclusive attention. She is tall, dignified, and has something of abstraction in her deportment; but from being constantly veiled, I have not been able to discern her countenance."

"I conjecture who you mean," replied Paulina, with quickness. "She is an elderly nun."

"I cannot guess her age, not having beheld her face; but yet her air and figure resembles some person I have seen, and that is familiar to me. Has she been long one of the Ursuline Sisters?"

"If it is sister Agnes that you mean, which is the only one which answers your description, she has but very lately been professed. We seldom see her amongst the sisters, for she is subject to terrible fits, which confine her sometimes to her cell for days together, and often she has particular masses said for her. To-morrow, if she is tolerable, you will be sure to see her in the chapel, it is a holiday, being the fast of St. ——; you will easily distinguish her from the rest of us, for she always sits apart, and appears to be truly penitent, of whatever nature may have been her life, from her extraordinary humiliation."

A strange and terrific idea took possession of Deletia's mind, which she could not dismiss, and with some anxiety she waited the sound of the bell on the following morning, for assembling them to high mass.

When she entered the chapel, she took her seat opposite to the part where Paulina informed her, sister Agnes always placed herself. She came in some time before the ceremony commenced, and with folded hand and prostrate humiliation, she was wholly absorbed in devotion. Her voice ascended in deep-toned melody above every other in the solemn chant of the nuns, and though they were all fervent in prayer, her's appeared of that description which was the effect of inspiration.

When the service was ended, and most of the nuns withdrawn to assemble in the parlour, to partake of a repast of fruit and cakes, Deletia observed this nun retreated from the rest of the sisters,

and with solemn steps, and downcast looks, was proceeding towards the gallery which led to the various cells.

That Deletia might obtain an opportunity of a better view of her, she placed herself in the spot which she must pass: as she did so, a heavy sigh escaped Deletia, which awakened the momentary attention of the nun, who, half raising her veil, turned with an eye of piercing scrutiny towards her, and the next instant, sister Agnes fell prostrate at her feet.

The person of the nun was no longer a stranger to Deletia, nor was her's to sister Agnes. The shadowy form of lady Deletia Granville perpetually flitting before the eyes of Lady Valville, seemed now to have even penetrated into a convent's gloom, and in at present really beholding Deletia, her ladyship, now in the character of sister Agnes imagined she saw that appalling form which was ever before her. It had met

her during the last week, not only in the hours of solemn and religious meditation in the chapel, but it had crossed her continually in the sequestered cloisters, and now impeded her steps in the face of noon-day.

Deletia, trembling with emotion, when she actually recognized Lady Valville as a sister of the Ursulines, would have fled from her presence, but she remained in a state of insensibility extended on the ground. She therefore waited beside her, till one of the nuns passed that way, who would afford assistance in endeavouring to recover her.

On Lady Valville opening her eyes, she was seized with a new sensation of horror.

"Oh, look not upon me!" cried she, in wild incoherence, with such an expression of reproach and anger — cannot even this holy sanctuary shield me from that appalling form?" — She hid her face in the shoulder of the nun, who in a

whisper, requested Deletia to acquaint the *superieure* of sister Agnes's strange disordered state, and beg that some aid might be procured for her.

Deletia, distressed and agitated by this unexpected interview, went in search of Paulina, and requested her to communicate to the abbess, the indisposition of sister Agnes, for she did not intend at present, to reveal her recognition of sister Agnes, in the person of Lady Valville.

She immediately withdrew to her own cell, that she might in some degree compose her fluttered spirits, and consider what line of conduct to pursue with respect to Lady Valville, whose pale countenance and wasted form, as she lay extended before her, strongly indicated the wretched state of her mind; and if she had been the destroyer of her mother, and had proved the source of such accumulated misery to herself, Lady Valville was of the three, perhaps, the per-

son most to be commiserated, for their sorrows here must terminate, her's would too surely be extended to eternity.

The *superieure* had always remarked, that this daughter of penitence, ever since she sought refuge in the Ursuline convent, was plunged into deep and hidden remorse, and sorrow, which preyed upon her conscience, and undermined her health, spending all her hours in penance and prayer, rejecting in a tone of marked despair, every consolation that was offered her, and assiduously avoiding all intercourse with the sisterhood. The only person who was able in any shape to subdue the anguish of her mind, was the priest who accompanied her to Rouen, and was present when she was professed. She had given largely to this convent, which was very needy; many indulgences in consequence had been granted; and having learnt that she was a woman of high condition, repeated benefactions were still expected from her connections.

Sister Agnes continued in such a perturbed state during the remainder of the day and the evening, as to affright the abbess, and one of the most sanctified of the nuns who sat beside her. From her wild and detached speeches, the abbess collected enough to discover the young English boarder had proved the cause of her present disordered state, and was importantly concerned in her history.

The *superieure* more than once proposed sending for Deletia; but the bare idea of again beholding her had such an unhappy effect in bringing on her wanderings, the abbess did not attempt it; but left her in the care of sister Paulina, from whom she seemed to taste some degree of consolation.

In the morning, when Lady Valville became more collected, she was informed that it really was Deletia whom she had seen, she requested, that she might con-

verse with her alone, as she had a matter of importance to reveal.

The abbess, readily acceded to the request, when she understood, that the young creature in question was, exclusive of her engagement to her son, the daughter of her late husband.

But to the iniquitous part of sister Agnes's history, the abbess was happily a stranger, or she would have been afraid, such an abandoned person would have corrupted the whole community of sisters. Father Dermont, like a true Jesuit, had acted his part well, and Lady Valville's entrance into the Ursuline convent was preceded by an immense donation, which had purchased her admittance.

CHAPTER XXI.

From infancy, until the present unhappy period, Deletia had seen too much of Lady Valville, to be at present intimidated at the idea of the approaching interview, which she rather desired than shunned; hoping that some future good might spring from Lady Valville's remorse, if she proved a sincere penitent.

When Deletia entered her cell, and beheld her devested of all her former grandeur, emaciated in form, her eyes sunk and hollow, her countenance livid; and she heard the deep tones of her sepulchral voice, when she desired her to draw near her, she was ready to start away from the appalling aspect which she presented.

"Well, may you," said she, in a hollow voice, "be frightened at the change a few short months has made in my appearance. I am dying by inches, Deletia. The eternal worm which preys upon my conscience is my destroyer. It is fit that you should see and know it. Like you, I once was young, innocent, and lovely; but I was ambitious, I was proud; I aspired to a degree which I could not have attained, but by outraging every law, human and divine. Deletia, I was the murderer of your mother."

Although Deletia knew it was so, this confession raised from her an involuntary shriek; and covering her face with both her hands, she remained for some time stunned by Lady Valville's acknowledgment.

"You have long conjectured," proceeded she, "the fatal truth. Alas! the conviction proved too strong to attempt to finally deceive you."

"Oh! if it be possible to render you retribution for all the injuries I have poured upon your head, I yet will do it. But my life will now be very brief; it is just coming to a close, and if any thing can cheer the awful prospect of that terrible hour, it will be, having disclosed to you, ere I go hence, the devices which I practised to attain the height of my ambition. That I did attain it is most true. The searcher of all hearts, who knew the wickedness of mine, suffered me for a short period to revel in the happiness which I thought I possessed; but as evil is the punishment of evil, soon was I hurled into the abyss of that misery I so justly deserved."

"You behold me, Deletia," proceeded she, "the veriest wretch that ever was created; for you behold me, on the brink of that eternity, to which I am hastening with, *all my imperfections on my head.* Tell me, ere I dare proceed, ere I dare unfold the rest of my direful

history, whether you can pity and forgive me?"

Deletia was unable to speak, but her countenance bore testimony of the varied emotions of horror, yet commiseration, which overwhelmed her.

"You shall hear me now," added Lady Valville, "for soon that tongue will be mute, which became so seducing to your father; that hand motionless which numbered your angelic mother with the dead."

"In pity, proceed not," exclaimed the weeping Deletia, "I am unable to hear any more of your dreadful narrative."

"I cannot, I will not pause," interrupted she in the same hollow tone, yet resolute firmness. She then continued,—"When first I saw your father and mother, it was in Paris; they were a youthful and lovely young couple; happiness sat on their brow, and not a sentiment arose in the bosom of the one,

which was not instantly transferred to the other. Lady Deletia possessed the innocence and simplicity of a child in all her actions; her manners were full of grace, because they were guileless; her disposition was gentle and uniformly fine, for she was free from every vicious passion.

"Oh! Deletia, had the standard of my conduct through life been guided by the peerless example of your angelic mother, what a pure creature should I now have been. How well prepared at this awful moment to have joined the celestial company of angels."

Lady Valville, exhausted and much affected, after pausing for a short time, went on.—"Your father was no less elegant in person than in mind, in every respect he was an accomplished and finished gentleman; his figure was noble and majestic, his eyes beamed with intelligence, and he was a man formed to win

and captivate a heart that never until he was seen, had been capable of a tender passion.

"I was the youngest daughter of a numerous Irish family, who were all rigid Catholics; my parents intended me for a nun, but my fondness for the world, my taste for pleasure, and the uncommon sprightliness of my disposition, were ill suited for a monastic life. I resolved to take the earliest opportunity of defeating their intentions, and ran off with a young nobleman who had a commission in a regiment stationed at ——, when they were ordered to other quarters.

"Lord Valville possessed only a very small property, his habits were gay and expensive, therefore our circumstances were very confined. Valville was one of those officers who fell in the action with General Wolfe, and left me little more than an empty title for my portion, with an infant boy.

"I found that in Paris I could partake

of the pleasures of society and the diversions of the world at considerable less expence, and with far more *eclat* than in London. To Paris, therefore, I went; my title gave me consequence, my address was insinuating, my disposition sprightly, I was admired for my beauty, and found no difficulty in being introduced at court. Soon, not only a multitude of visitors flocked about me, but I had the advantage of the highest company at a very moderate and easy rate.

" Mr. Granville and Lady Deletia were at the chateau of the Marquiss D'A—— where I chanced at the same time to be staying. My spirits were remarkably gay, and I charmed both your father and mother.

" The evenings were spent in dancing and music, Mr. Granville selected me for his partner, and I said a thousand lively things which seemed to please his fancy. Lady Deletia, was captivated with my music, I had a turn for mimicry, which

though a dangerous and unenviable talent, always diverts at the moment when it is called into exercise, and I was particularly happy in imitating the French drama. After we had spent several days together at the Marquiss's chateau, I had so completely insinuated myself into the esteem and good opinion of your parents, I perceived with a little address, in a short time they would not be able to live without me. To be the inmate of your parents at Granville Abbey became the height of my desire and ambition; myself and child would live free of expence, and I esteemed your parents, for at that period I had formed none of those wild stratagems which afterwards took possession of my youthful fancy, to the destruction of your innocent mother, whose mind was too pure to cherish a sentiment unfavourable to her friend, for we lived in the most perfect friendship and harmony; and though I afterwards saw your mother proved the

sole barrier to my ambitious views, I had not then formed the diabolical plan for her destruction. I really loved Lady Deletia, none could see and know her without so doing, for she was a celestial creature."

"Were you not then," said Deletia, "awed by her virtue?"

"For a time I was; but I idolized your father. To call him mine, was not more necessary to my peace than to my ambition. After the idea once took possession of my mind, that if Lady Deletia was no more, he would be induced to marry me, that I should be the mistress of Granville Abbey, and my child, consequently, handsomely provided for, I stopped at nothing finally to accomplish my end, for I could play upon your father as I pleased, and I no longer considered any other object but myself, to attain my aim. Your mother was on the eve of her confinement—perhaps she might die. Oh! how ardently did I

wish not only her death, but that also of her unborn and innocent babe. She gave birth to a daughter — that daughter was yourself; and Lady Deletia recovered. She looked more beautiful than ever, and was more fondly loved and cherished. Thus were my aspiring hopes fatally blighted, and my ambition without any prop to sustain it. But I was not of a temper to despair, I daily gained new ascendancy over your father, for Lady Deletia spent so large a portion of her time in the nursery we were left much alone. When Mr. Granville expressed anxiety and showed listlessness at your mother's long absence, I rallied him unmercifully, and turned him into such ridicule, he was finally ashamed to discover his feelings in my presence; and I took care constantly to engage his attention, so as to beguile the time, either with some book or conversation. Your unguarded mother, who rejoiced in my power of amusing her husband,

took advantage of it by prolonging her absences, and when she returned with winning smiles of approbation, she said her nursery cares had estranged her from the delight which she took in our society."

"Thus passed the first year of your infancy. I could not support the caresses which were lavished upon you, nor the felicity which your mother enjoyed. But she became languid and thin from having too long nursed you. Tonics were prescribed. Then it was the fiend entered my bosom, and suggested the idea of mixing in her draughts a portion of laurel water which I had myself distilled, for I had made chemistry my study, and I knew it to be a certain poison. Too surely it proved so, when by degrees I strengthened this simple distillation, and if the effects were slow, the consequences certain. Your mother died. None ever certainly knew but myself, till, in after years, I unburthened

my heavily oppressed conscience to Mr. Dermont, that I had been her destroyer."

Deletia could hear no more — She fell lifeless on the bed of Lady Valville.

She also, overpowered by the terrible recollection, could not, at present, have proceeded with her terrible history.

In the morning she sent for Deletia to return again to her cell.

Deletia, whose soul had been harrowed up by the afflicting narrative which she had just heard, was, however, impatient to learn the conclusion of her parents' mournful history, she obeyed Lady Valville's summons in the morning, and she listened with painful emotion, as her Ladyship went on.

"Your mother would fain have breathed her last in my arms, for little did she guess that I had been her destroyer. But

I could not bear to look on her celestial countenance. Overwhelmed with guilt and shame, I withdrew myself from her presence, and only when the scene was closed, and her lifeless form extended on the bed, did I dare approach the hapless remains of that angelic woman. From the fatal moment of her death, never did I taste peace any more. The horror which overwhelmed me when the sad tidings reached the ear of your father, when I saw the bitter anguish of his soul, no words can paint the remorse I felt. Oh! if it had been possible to have recalled that fatal hour, when the vile suggestion first arose in my bosom, I would gladly have foregone all those dazzling prospects which opened upon me.

"The frantic grief which I displayed, Mr. Granville mistook for love and sorrow, which displayed itself in the form of violent and unrestrained emotion for the death of my lovely young friend and precious companion. His heart was not

formed by nature for suspicion, though when suspicion was once awakened, it never slept."

"The poignancy of Mr. Granville's affliction sought in me a soothing friend, to mitigate his sorrows. It is true I endeavoured to prove that friend, but at the very moment I was trying to pour balm into his bosom, mine was lacerated in every point. The bitterest recollections preyed upon me — my sleep deserted me, I became a haggard, pale, and care-worn creature. The generous nature of your father was touched by my altered appearance. His tenderness for me daily increased, and at the expiration of six months after the decease of Lady Deletia Granville, we were united in the little church of Clovelly, where, beneath the foot of that altar our vows were plighted, your mother slept in peace.

"The contending emotions which seized and overwhelmed me during the awful ceremony scarcely allowed me to go

through it; but we were united, and I attained the summit of my ambition; dearly purchased by the loss of that tranquillity and self-approbation, which never more returned."

"All that affection could bestow in tenderness, in unremitting kindness I received from Mr. Granville. But there were moments when the state of my mind proved insupportable. Your father imagined our residence at the Abbey recalled the remembrance of my departed friend with too much painful emotion, and he proposed changing the scene, and spending the spring in London.

"Not a room, not an object at Granville Abbey but recalled to my imagination the presence of Lady Deletia; I was haunted with her image; and, infant as you then were, your voice and the innocent expression of your countenance were a perpetual source of misery. It was agreed, that you should be left in the country; I therefore did look for-

ward, in going to London, to the enjoyment of more tranquillity."

"Mr. Granville lived in a style of splendour suitable to his fortune; and allowed me to fill my house with perpetual company. I did not pass an hour alone, and the evenings were always devoted to public amusements or crowded rooms, either abroad or at home. Thus the gay months of spring and early summer glided away in a temporary sort of forgetfulness, with tolerable appearance of tranquillity."

"But, alas! I could not fly from myself, and when accidentally alone during the early part of the day, I sunk into long fits of despondence. Granville wished me to invite some one of our young friends to be our guest; but I considered that too dangerous an experiment, by which to purchase ease of mind—for justly had your mother occasion to rue the day when first she invited me to accompany her to England, and become an inmate at Granville Abbey."

"My nervous state of irritability increased to the most alarming height. I started at my own shadow, and my rest became so perturbed from horrid dreams and appalling images, which haunted me in my sleep, I often alarmed and frightened your father with the terror in which I awoke, and the incoherence of my speeches when I slept; for your mother's name was ever coupled with that of murder."

"Mr. Granville, who had not been accustomed to reside in London, for Lady Deletia was fond of rural life and domestic habits, became weary of our continual engagements, and languished for the sports of the country in which he took delight. He hoped also, but,—ah! how vainly, to find in me the same lively and amusing companion, who used to beguile the hours in former happy times, with lively sallies and engaging accomplishments, and rendered, he then was pleased to say, Granville Abbey a

terrestrial paradise to his lamented Deletia and himself. Those blissful days were gone never to be renewed, and with those days the scene was so altered, Mr. Granville could now only find in me, a creature perfectly incapable of either amusing or rendering him happy."

" It was one of his chief consolations to talk of his departed wife, but the subject distracted me, and I was often compelled to fly his presence, to conceal the anguish which the subject created. By degrees, the confidence which Granville hitherto had placed in me, began to diminish. He also became silent, abstracted and desponding. Except during the hours of breakfast and dinner, we seldom met. He was absent the live-long day, and at last I discovered the largest portion of his time was spent in that fishing-house which overhangs the western cliff, and where, in the days of innocence and felicity, we were used of an evening to send our books, our harps, and drawing materials, and spend the pleasantest hours of summer. In fine weather, you

were carried to this romantic spot, where Lady Deletia fancied you were strengthened by the breeze from the sea, and her own enfeebled frame exhilarated, for at that period the deadly poison had entered her veins, and was rapidly undermining her constitution."

"Granville became, in the course of the autumn, so changed a being, I scarcely knew him for the same man he was a twelvemonth before, both in temper and appearance; his countenance was wild and haggard. When he fixed his eyes upon me, it was with a shuddering sort of horror, and though he forbore all reproach, yet I could guess, suspicion now, for the first time, had entered his bosom. I dared not hint to him the change which I remarked in his deportment towards me, and which, from being all gentleness, all tender anxiety, was become morose, irritable, nay, when off his guard, even ferocious. I was often frightened at his presence, and every

servant who before loved and respected him, were filled with awe and apprehension when they approached him."

"Mr. Granville now spent, not merely the whole of the day, but the half of the night absent from the Abbey. I discovered his midnight rambles were passed at the cold grave of Lady Deletia. Your father's reason, at intervals, seemed wholly to desert him, and I have no question, but it was at that season he was excited to erect that extraordinary monument in the church at Clovelly which appalled and overpowered me."

"The fatal morning on which he went from me, more collected and gentle than for a long while I had seen him, and after caressing you with the fondness with which he ever regarded you, he approached me, and taking my hand with something of his former tenderness, as the tears stood in his eyes, I affectionately gazed upon him, and was beginning to sooth his misery, when, with a frantic

gesture he started away, and casting on me a look of unutterable reproach and anguish, he cried in a piercing tone, as he struck his hand on his forehead, "*God forgive thee,*" and rushed from my presence. — I never saw Mr. Granville more! —"

Deletia, who sat in mute attention beside Lady Valville, could hardly sustain herself during the whole of her narrative. — Lady Valville wept not, but she was so overpowered at times, as to be obliged to make long pauses in her history.

"It is unnecessary," proceeded she, "to recur to the scene in the fishing-house. You are not ignorant, Deletia, of what there happened. — You saw the pistol, you read, you possess the fragment. — How the paper had been overlooked at the period of Mr. Granville's death, I know not, nor how you became its possessor."

"The tragical history of your family

here finished — would to heaven that my part in that history then had terminated; but *you* also was intended by me to act your part, and though prudence here overruled me, my son would not have scrupled to sacrifice his mother rather than have lost you. But you shall not, Deletia, be his, if I have power to prevent it — your sufferings shall end, your virtue be rewarded. — I know that Valville is now in Rouen, and you are his prisoner; but you shall not long remain so. I have opened my heart to the *superieure* and father — as far as respects your connection with me, and the intended connection with my son. — They are sensible of the injustice which has been rendered you — the cruelty practised to make you the tool of my ambition, and they are ready to befriend and support you."

"Tell me Deletia," added she, "and tell me with truth, on that rests your future prospect of felicity through life, whether a mutual attachment subsists between Lord

Dorringcourt and yourself? If it be the case, no longer shall I, or those belonging to me, impede your union. Valville never loved you — but he loved the prospect of a splendid establishment, which if he had proved worthy of you, he might have possessed."

"When he saw you averse from the union, then he, meanly, nay treacherously, would have violated the confidence which I had reposed in him, he would have exposed, betrayed his mother to the world, laid open her artifices! — and I was compelled to exercise new ones to ensnare you. You need not be told the subterfuge I used to win you over — I touched the master spring of your feelings — your filial duty was called in question — you were too good, too virtuous, to withstand a request which appealed so solemnly to those filial duties, and you agreed to wed Lord Valville.—Lord Dorringcourt is the objecton whom you ought

to bestow your hand, for he alone is worthy that preference ; inform me with candour whether he has desired it ?"

In a low voice Deletia answered in the affirmative.

" I rejoice to hear it. Then you will yet be happy. — The generous spirit of your father induced him to confer upon me a large jointure, which being left chiefly in landed property, at my death is to devolve upon my son. Valville has a small estate in Ireland, and I have no doubt, as he possesses spirit, his disappointment, though it will for a time mortify him, will not break his heart. Probably he will enter the army, and change of scene and gay society will soon dispel his chagrin."

" Now," proceeded Lady Valville, " if you will, Deletia, trust one whose life has been a series of hyprocrisy and deception. If, on my dying couch, you will listen to, and believe my protestation, I solemnly declare, the confidence you

repose shall not be betrayed, and Mrs. Abbot, who is at present in Rouen, shall conduct you in perfect safety to the Dorringcourt family. The abbess gives you permission to depart, and in departing, peace and felicity, pure as your deserts, be henceforth your portion. You have, in the most trying circumstances, conducted yourself nobly. You have displayed a degree of fortitude, integrity, and strength of mind unequalled for one of your early years. The character of your mother is reflected in yourself; you are indeed worthy to be her daughter."

Lady Valville, exhausted and overwhelmed, sunk fainting on her couch from the exertion and effort she had used to conclude this mournful history.

When Deletia dwelt upon the past, and reflected, that without Lady Val-

ville again betrayed her into the hands of her son, her situation could not prove more wretched than her present; after some hesitation, she was induced to accept her profered friendship, on condition, that before she left the convent, she was placed under the care of Mrs. Abbot, with the assurance that she would conduct her back to Lady Robina Somerville.

Accumulated as were the crimes of Lady Valville, Deletia believed that she might now be trusted; beholding her stretched on the bed of death, devested of every worldly vanity, sinking under the torture of an evil conscience, voluntarily confessing her crimes, and devoting the remaining hours of her fast declining life, in penitence and prayer; and anxious to render her justice and retribution for the miseries which she had brought upon her family.

The *superieure*, she had been assured,

was disposed to befriend her. Deletia, therefore, communicated to her the conversation she had just held with her step-mother.

The abbess, in reply, informed Deletia, she would report her case to the abbé, her brother, for without his authority, she could not be allowed to depart. If he made no objection to her dismissal from the convent, she should not be detained, and in the evening he was expected.

Mr. Dermont had been sent for by Lady Valville, and he spent some hours with her, accompanied by the abbé.

The interval of time was passed by Deletia, in a state of anxiety and apprehension, for her fate now hung on the issue of their decision.

At length, the rev. brethren entered the parlour, where Deletia, was waiting in painful suspense, attended by the abbess.

"Miss Granville," said Mr. Dermont, "you are free to depart. Your conduct is irreproachable;" and I may say, added he, turning to the abbé, "our daughter is released from her engagement."

"You may," replied the abbé.

"The reverend father," continued he, to Deletia, "represents your conduct in a very different light to what I had conceived it to be; and the events of your life have sprung from such extraordinary causes, I do not consider myself entitled to impose any more authority over your actions. Our penitent daughter, Agnes, is on the verge of the other world; pray for her release from suffering; pray that her soul, in passing into eternity, may at last enter the regions of the blessed. But you must see her no more, it would disturb the repose of her last hours."

"Go in peace, my daughter," added

he, passing his hand in benediction over her head.

Deletia bowed in respectful silence.

Mrs. Abbot was waiting at the grate to receive her. When she saw that excellent woman, she threw herself into her arms in a flood of tears.

The last few months of Deletia's life had been so much tinctured with romantic adventures, she looked back with wonder on the past, and apprehension at the future.

Now it appeared, she was wholly released from the power of Valville, as far as related to those who were connected with him. Yet she dreaded his violence, until she was again safe under the shelter of the Dorringcourt family.

Mrs. Abbot had been boarded in a French family, ever since her lady had taken the veil; and though she was anxious to return to her native land, she perceived Lady Valville so fast

declining, when she visited her at the convent grate, she could not have reconciled her mind to leave Rouen at the present, if Miss Granville had not been consigned to her immediate care.

Mrs. Abbot had been the early guide of Deletia's infancy, her instructress in childhood, and her firm friend in more advanced years. She loved her as a daughter; though from her own dependent state, it proved impossible to aid or protect her, during the period of former distressing scenes at Granville Abbey, yet she had bore no inconsiderable share in her sufferings.

Mr. Dermont immediately followed Deletia into the court of the convent, and, after conducting her and Mrs. Abbot to one of the hotels, he put them into a cabriolet, and set them on their way to Havre, the place to which Deletia requested to return.

The joyful sensation of this moment

was almost as over-powering to Deletia as her sufferings had proved. The late hurry of her life, and perpetual change of scene had kept her spirits in a constant tumult; she could hardly credit that she was once more, not only at liberty, but on the way to her beloved friend Lady Robina Somerville.

When Deletia was fairly departed, the abbé sought Valville, to whom he unfolded the situation of his mother.

He heard him with surprise and consternation. When he found that Deletia had been living in the same convent, he lost all patience and temper, at the perfect ignorance in which he had remained of a matter so important; and without listening to the abbé's communication, he set out with all speed to the convent gate, without reflecting that he could have no admittance without the introduction of the abbé, and then only at the grate, to the *superieure*.

Valville was obliged to wait outside the portal till the abbé overtook him.

When they entered the convent, the first intelligence which met them from a lay sister was, that one of the nuns who had been in the last extremity for some hours, had just expired, and the abbess and nuns at the present time were assembled in the chapel.

The abbé suspected that it was Valville's mother, and when he learned that it was sister Agnes, the fact was ascertained.

The abbé told Valville that he must now leave him, and proceed on his holy function, but that he would visit him as soon as his sacred duties were ended.

Valville had no alternative, except to depart. The rules of the convent could not be broken into. Execrating his own fate, and the whole order of the Ursu-

lines, he returned to his hotel in sullen silence.

Mrs. Abbot faithfully fulfilled her office, in bestowing all care and tenderness on Deletia, whose griefs were soothed by the attention which she paid her.

When, in every additional mile which they travelled, Deletia was convinced, according to the posts, she was actually on the way to Havre, her spirits revived, and her confidence became strengthened; though still she was haunted with the apprehension that Valville yet would pursue and reclaim her.

Mrs. Abbot informed Deletia of all the circumstances which had occurred since her abrupt departure from the Abbey; of Lady Valville's flight from London, and her determination to take the veil, which was easily accomplished through the mediation of Mr. Dermont, who attended her to France.

Deletia, in her turn, related to Mrs. Abbot all the events which had happened to her since they parted. The excellent Mrs. Abbot promised Deletia that she would never more desert her.

CHAPTER XXII.

It was with sensations of anxious joy Deletia entered Havre, and from thence proceeded to d'Ingouville; but when she stopt at the gate of the pavilion, she was seized with apprehension that Lady Robina might be returned to England, and had taken Victoire along with her.

Her painful doubts were in a moment happily relieved, for, with an exclamation of joy, Victoire made her appearance.

When she beheld Deletia, instead of advancing to meet her, she ran back, eager to communicate the delightful tidings of her return to Lady Robina Somerville.

The transport of the moment admitted not of words; tender and congratulating salutations passed on each side. When Deletia became collected and composed, she related to Lady Robina her romantic history.

Her ladyship informed her Maublanc had gone to Paris, not an hour after she became acquainted with the extraordinary manner in which she had been separated from the Berties; but, although he had been most vigilant and active, nothing satisfactory had hitherto reached her of his success, in consequence of which, it was her determination to have repaired to Paris on the following day.

"Now, indeed," added Lady Robina, "I have cause to rejoice that my intention is thus happily defeated."

"Sweetest Deletia," proceeded she, affectionately embracing her, "my family never more will lose sight of you. Soon you will become one of its most important members, one of its greatest ornaments.

The tenderest ties of connection will unite us, and the late cloud of sorrow will for ever be dispelled."

Victoire hung about Deletia with fondness, and greeted Mrs. Abbot with cordial welcome.

In the midst of these felicitous salutations, Lady Robina said with an arch smile, which at the moment she seemed to have stolen from her sister Elinor, "Our happiness yet wants an addition to render it complete."

She threw open the door of the saloon, and Lord Dorringcourt in a transport of joy, flung himself at Deletia's feet.

"My own, my precious Deletia," exclaimed he, in a voice of joy, "never do we part more, death alone shall divide us — Oh! say," continued he, "that you forgive the wild project I formed of sending you hither — but I then judged it for the best, the safest measure. If it had been possible to have foreseen the harassing life you were to go through, the accumulated

miseries which awaited you; rather would I have yielded up my own existence, than have led to a possibility of again throwing you in the way of Valville.

"Tell me, angelic Miss Granville, that you pardon my error, and that you will not withdraw the hand you once pledged should be mine?"

"If you have erred, my lord," replied she, in a soothing tone of kindness, "it could only be from too much zeal; from the tenderest anxiety for my safety. We are all liable to mistakes; and Mr. Rutherford, excellent man, not unnaturally imagined from having before experienced the violence of Lord Valville's revengeful disposition, that a different kingdom would prove my only place of safety.

"To see you now, oh Dorringcourt, to be assured that your affection is undiminished, repays me for all the wretchedness I have experienced; we will revert to those sad scenes no more."

The rest of the evening was spent in that calm enjoyment which springs from the possession of virtuous and well-directed affection. Lord Dorringcourt hung over every word and look of Deletia with anxious fondness; while she melted into tears of tenderness and gratitude; in a release from sorrow, her heart was subdued by the affectionate kindness of Lord Dorringcourt.

His lordship had, immediately on the receipt of his sister's letter, embarked for Havre. He was but just arrived, and only waited the coming in of the post, in the hope it would bring some tidings of Deletia, previous to his departure for Paris.

The hurry and tumult of Deletia's life appeared like a distressing dream, so rapidly had each passing event succeeded each other. The unexpected one of now seeing Lord Dorringcourt, had indeed removed every former care; and now that she considered herself protected by

Mr. Dermont, she lost much of the dread of Valville.

The following morning, Lord Dorringcourt requested the indulgence of an hour's conversation with Deletia; a request which she could not refuse.

His lordship began addressing her with a renewal of his affection; and he drew from her in return, a confession that he alone had ever possessed any ascendancy over her heart.

"Think not, beloved Miss Granville," said he, delighted, "that after an acknowledgment so flattering to my prospects of future felicity, I mean to take an undue advantage of your goodness, in what I am going to say. I am aware of all that is due to a mind so pure, so delicate, so full of excellence, and all that proper dignity which alone belongs to exalted characters."

"May I go on?" said he with earnestness, and half-smiling, add, "without being considered an encroacher?"

"Proceed, my lord," interrupted she, with an encouraging smile, "It is not likely that you will make any request inconsistent with your sense of right."

"Thus animated, then, by your goodness, I will proceed. Yet be not alarmed, be not intimidated, dear Deletia, when I earnestly intreat you will suffer me to call you mine before the day expires. Then no Valville can tear you from me. — I assert my rights as your husband. — I defy his threats — nor will he dare to alarm, when he is assured that you are lost to him for ever."

Deletia remained silent.

"Speak to me, lovely Miss Granville; wherefore that look of care? — say that you are not unwilling to assent to my proposal?"

"I am not unwilling, my Lord," replied she, with seriousness, "but so suddenly to hurry you into an alliance, when you are absent from your home, separated from your other sister, and deprived of

those forms which cannot be admitted in a Catholic country."

"What are all idle forms of ceremonious ostentation," interrupted he, with quickuess, "but unnecessary parade, which carries no pure joy home to the bosom. They may do for those whose alliance is founded only on ambitious prospects, who love the pageantry of the world better than the quiet unobtrusive affections of the heart. We want none of these, my Deletia.—It is true, I bestow on you a name, a title in which I glory. It has descended from my ancestors pure and unsullied by a single blemish.—But I bestow on myself a far dearer title in that of your husband, whose heart, glowing with the fondest affection, will henceforth be devoted to your happiness."

"My sister Robina," proceeded his lordship, "is aware of the necessity of our immediate union. Let a priest now join our hands, and after we disembark

at Southampton, we will proceed to the Isle of Wight, where excellent Mr. Clinton, in his church, shall again unite us. Refuse not my request."

Deletia paused for some time—She was distressed, grave, and thoughtful.

"It is not possible," she at length said, with a heavy sigh and tearful sadness, "to accede to your request."

"You are ignorant, it appears, my lord, of the clause in my father's will, I cannot accept the honour of the title which you would confer upon me."

"Not accept it," cried he, with dismay and astonishment, "what means Miss Granville?—Oh! in mercy torture me not with such terrible suspense—Explain yourself Deletia."

"The matter, my lord, alas! is too clear, my father was equally proud of his ancient name, as you have reason to be of your title. It is not in my power to relinquish that of Granville."

A thunderbolt seemed to have fallen on the head of Lord Dorringcourt — Stunned, amazed, and inexpressibly shocked, he was speechless for some minutes.

" I ask you not, my lord," said Deletia, with gentleness and pity, seeing the anguish of his countenance, " to forgo your title — your name. It is a sacrifice which I have no right to expect. It is, in truth, purchasing at far too high a price the honor you would have conferred upon me in your alliance."

" This indeed," cried he, in a tone of despair, " is a trial for which I acknowledge I was wholly unprepared. — Oh, how imperfect is human bliss! How little are our frailties able to cope with sudden disappointments, with the extraordinary transitions from joy to grief!"

His lordship walked up and down the room in great agitation, and seemed struggling to conquer the contending emotions which rose in his bosom.

At length he approached Deletia.

"I am ashamed," said he, with a forced smile of attempted composure, "that you should, Miss Granville, witness the struggle that is passing within. It is not an arrogant assumption of superiority I mean to take upon me, nor contempt for the name of your respected and ancient family. But while I declare I know not how to part with mine, the boast of generations, without being guilty of apparent contempt and disrespect towards the memory of those by whom it was fondly cherished, I see at once the difficulties which naturally arise to impede our union. Oh, Miss Granville! pity the weakness of human nature, which discovers, at this moment, the imbecility of a mind wavering with the most distressing doubts."

"Be not in doubt, sir," cried Deletia, with firmness and dignity, somewhat piqued and offended. "Be not in any

difficulty — preserve your title, and relinquish my hand."

"Cruel Deletia," interrupted his lordship, much hurt, "thus to talk. Oh, if you could but read my thoughts! — and guess the love and veneration in which I hold you, such unkind reproach would not flow from your lips."

"Let us speak on the subject no more," cried she, "when a case is remédiless, it were idle to perplex the cause."

"You will drive me to distraction, if you go on thus — unkind Deletia."

"Wherefore unkind? — you, my lord, named the impossibility which exists."

"On my side, impossible! — yet not on yours, if you will but listen to me — Oh! my beloved Deletia," added he, with fervour, "if you could consent, for my sake, to become portionless — to relinquish your name, and the estates of Granville Abbey, and accept that of

Dorringcourt, my gratitude would then be as unbounded as my affection."

"I give you," he added, "a few hours to consider the subject — and though I am aware, that my request is of so unreasonable a nature, I hardly dare encourage the most distant hope, that for *me*, you will make so great a sacrifice."

Lord Dorringcourt left the room.

For some time Deletia sat lost in abstraction. The proposal made to her of for ever relinquishing an inheritance which hitherto she had not enjoyed, and of which she was just coming into the possession, was to a mind disinterested as her own, a very severe trial and test of affection. There was, however, but one alternative; either to renounce her name and property, or give up Lord Dorringcourt wholly. His lordship had certainly discovered the proper feeling and dignity of his character, in not

merely relinquishing all desire of a wealthy heiress, but was content to take her without the smallest portion. There was something so noble, disinterested and flattering to her, in Lord Dorringcourt's conduct, she began to feel she ought not to repine or suffer disappointment, when he could forgo such large worldly advantages for her sake; and after a little reflection, she resolved to become the wife of Lord Dorringcourt, rather than inherit such splendid misery — divided from those who constituted all her prospect of happiness through life.

Granville Abbey had rather been a place of imprisonment to her, than a happy home. It had proved the scene of such direful events to her lamented parents, whose sufferings would there be ever present to her imagination, she felt no regret in the idea of taking an eternal leave of the Abbey. No felicity was without alloy, and the prospect of a soothing and tender friend through life,

presented such an inviting hope of happiness and repose, she could not refuse the offered blessings. Her property in the event of her demise, or giving up her name, passed into a distant branch of the Granville family. They were lineally descended from *Richard de Granville*, who held the lordship of Neath, in South Wales, and was one of the twelve knights who conquered Glamorganshire, in the year 1090.

The branch of the family to whom the estates would now ultimately belong, were French, and had a noble and ancient chateau in the vicinity of Toulouse.

When Deletia was decided in her intentions, she was too noble-minded to keep Lord Dorringcourt a moment in suspense. She communicated to his sister her determination to accept her brother's hand on his own terms, and begged her to acquaint him with her decision.

"Generous, exalted Deletia," cried Lady Robina, with a tone and look of

admiration. "No ignoble passion lurks in your bosom. My brother will be the happiest of men, and Elinor and myself the happiest of sisters. You possess a just and true estimate of wealth. It indeed purchases the luxuries of life; and its silly vanities; but, ah! how often does it prove inimical to happiness! — You shall never miss what you have forgone for our sakes — my brother has a liberal spirit, and not a wish of your heart will he suffer to remain unfulfilled."

Lady Robina sought Lord Dorringcourt.

The joy which he experienced was diffused over his noble and ingenuous countenance. He expressed, in terms of the warmest gratitude and affection, the obligations which Deletia had conferred upon him.

Weak and affected scruples had no share in Deletia's conduct. When once her word was given, she had no wish to

retract. She saw with Lord Dorringcourt and his sister the urgency for an immediate union, and the necessity of a speedy retreat from Havre. A priest was therefore sent for, and in the presence of Lady Robina Somerville, Madame Maublanc, her daughter, and Mrs. Abbot, Lord Dorringcourt was united to Deletia Granville.

It was agreed that Victoire should remain with her mother, as Maublanc was not yet returned from his embassy to Paris.

Lord and Lady Dorringcourt invited them all to come over to England to spend the winter in Warwickshire, in a small house pertaining to Oakley Park, which his lordship promised should exclusively belong to them.

Deletia took leave of France not without sensations of painful yet delightful emotions, for it had proved the scene in her late eventful life, of some of its most interesting and extraordinary occurrences,

— and as the vessel glided from the port of Havre, she gazed on the lovely heights of d'Ingourville, and shed tears of grateful recollection, over a spot which had proved the birth-day of her happiness.

They were landed at Cowes, and proceeded direct to Barton villa, but experienced no inconsiderable degree of disappointment, when they found Lady Barbara was gone on a visit to her niece, who had earnestly solicited her to join her during her solitude, as it was impossible to leave Lady Robina's children.

They next drove to the parsonage, and were again fated to be disappointed. Mr. Clinton was confined to his bed with serious indisposition, therefore, as it was impracticable for him to again reunite Lord Dorringcourt to Deletia, by performing the marriage ceremony, they lost no more time in proceeding with all possible expedition to Warwickshire.

Lady Elinor, with steps of jöy, ran into the hall to meet them, — she affection-

ately embraced Deletia, and looking at her with an arch smile, and dropping a curtesy, said "the Countess of Dorringcourt, I presume; — is it so brother?"

"It is, my dearest Elinor," cried he with looks of grateful joy. "You see before you, in the most noble, the most disinterested of women, my precious wife. Deletia is in truth Countess of Dorringcourt. For my sake she has become poor, to make me rich in bliss, I estimate Deletia as she deserves, for she has the soul of an angel."

His lordship then formally presented Deletia to his sister, as Countess of Dorringcourt.

They adjourned into the small drawing-room, where Lady Barbara Arden was the next person to welcome and congratulate her nephew upon his marriage.

But there was yet one person in the group, who had been overlooked, and who now came forward, — the Rev. Mr. Arden; he and his wife had been on a

short visit to her mother, who lived near Warwick, and he took Oakley Park in his way home.

This was indeed an agreeable surprise, and opportune visit to Lord Dorringcourt of his cousin's, for he resolved immediately that he should again join the hands of Deletia and himself. Deletia, who instantly recognised in the Rev. Mr. Arden the same clergyman who had been called upon to officiate in the church at Clovelly, said to him with an enchanting smile, "you are, sir, called upon once more to perform the marriage ceremony, for the no longer wretched Deletia Granville, but the happy Deletia Dorringcourt. The ties which united me to be best of men in France must be rendered, it seems, more binding, by again uniting our hands. Most opportunely are you here to witness that felicity I am assured you will participate. In Lord Dorringcourt you see, sir, the husband of my choice."

"And you behold," eagerly interrupted

his lordship, "my cousin Arden, a man, whose felicity is as unbounded as his gratitude."—

Lord Dorringcourt prevailed upon Mr. Arden to remain till a special licence was obtained from London.

In the village church adjacent, (the living of which was in the gift of his lordship) Mr. Arden was permitted to join the hands of this interesting and lovely young couple.

THE CONCLUSION.

The vessel in which Lord Valville embarked for England, was overtaken by a tremendous storm, and wrecked off the coast of Brighton, in crossing from Dieppe. Valville was one in the number who perished, and proved an awful example to his fellow passengers of a remorseless conscience, and no fear of God; for the last words which he uttered, were impious execrations at the prospect of his untimely fate, as he beheld the mountainous waves approaching to overwhelm him.

Lady Elinor Arden was united a few months after her brother's marriage, to a very amiable young nobleman of large

fortune, for whom she had long entertained a tender partiality.

Lady Robina Somerville divided her time chiefly between her aunt, Lady Barbara, and her late husband's relations.

From the very pensive turn of her ladyship's mind, none of her relations would admit of her living alone.

Excellent Mr. Rutherford, and the worthy Clintons warmly partook in Deletia's felicity. They all paid her a visit of congratulation at Oakley Park.

Granville Abbey became an untenanted desert. The French family to whom it devolved, never visited England, and merely placed a factor on the estate to gather in the rents. All its lovely and romantic scenes were suffered to run into wild desolation, and the ancient building to fall to decay.

The reverend Mr. Arden, whom it was my chance to meet with, after a lapse of

fifty years, according to the date of the MS. which he put into my hands, was at that period, the only remaining

"Historian of the pensive plain."

THE END.

Printed for Strahan and Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square, London.

